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Chronicles

A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

AMERICAN FICTION

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A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

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A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE
Vol. 13, No. 5 May 1989

On 'Decline of the West'

Richard Lamm, in his "Decline of the West" (February 1989), has put his finger on something that I call GIRA —acronym for Good Intentions Run Amok. GIRA arises from the desire to make life easy, safe, long, and pleasant. Its symptoms include permissive child-rearing (mustn't bruise a tender ego— let 'em run wild), schools that graduate half-educated students (mustn't hurt their feelings by making them repeat a grade), "revolving-door" justice (don't just lock up criminals, find a way to rehabilitate them), and liability-suit verdicts that reward fools for the consequences of their own actions (mustn't waste those nice deep pockets that the insurance company has).

Mechanisms for implementing GIRA include "value-free" ethics, freedom of speech pressed beyond the point of license, and the substitution of "social gospel" for personal morality. They make the tender-minded among us feel generous, tolerant, and compassionate —at little direct cost to themselves.

But James Thurber put it well: "You might as well fall flat on your face as lean over too far backwards." These short-term gratifications have pernicious long-term effects, which Lamm has described. They have discredited— indeed, they have nearly obliterated— the old virtues of work, excellence, personal responsibility, and an outlook that goes beyond instant self-indulgence.

I don't have any pat remedy for GIRA. If there is a remedy, it will have to reflect a few realities about the world as it actually works. And it must start in the home, even in the cradle. "Too little and too late" simply will not serve.

—Charles H. Chandler
Malden, MA

On 'Epitaph for Tombstone'

I read with admiration and interest Odie B. Faulk's well-written account (February 1989) of what the town of Tombstone, Arizona, was really like, stripped of its lovingly (and avariciously) cultivated patina of Wild West folklore. I submit the maverick opinion, however, that Professor Faulk's overly fastidious conclusion does not necessarily follow from his well-marshaled facts.

Why, one wonders, couldn't those who like to invest a bit of romance and, yes, hype, into their visions of the Wild West be doing so not because there is "some dark strain . . . that attracts us to evil men," but simply because they see something uniquely American in that aura of lusty, straight-shooting, fierce independence that marked the early days of the great frontier?

Jeane Kirkpatrick once remarked in an interview that one of her chief objections to current political trends in American colleges is that many students are being cheated out of the simple but profound right to feel proud of their own country. Surely Professor Faulk can find a more worthy outlet for his righteous indignation than to demand of Jane and John Q. Public (vide Robert Frost) "better bread than can be made from flour."

—O.M. Ostlund Jr.
State College, PA

On 'Hard Living on Easy Street'

I became addicted to *Chronicles* as a result of my two sons reading it. Tonight I found two letters from Murfreesboro, Tennessee (February 1989): will wonders never cease. I was stunned to discover there were two literate people in Murfreesboro, much less two who read *Chronicles*.

And a social worker yet! Suzie Tolmie, I'm awed. You both have a point: one has to keep the alligators at bay while the more sophisticated Professor McMurry drains the swamp. The Galilean commanded those who would aspire to be his disciples both to solve the short-term problem and to redirect the heart to a redemptive lifestyle. Dear folks, keep talking— serious communication on the subject is rare.

—John Acuff
Cookeville, TN

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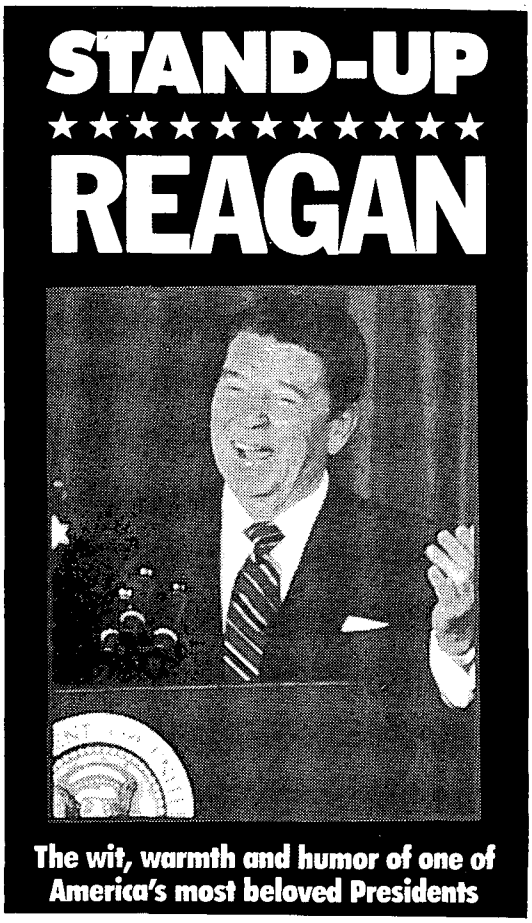

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MAY 1989/5

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IF IT'S CHRISTMAS, then 'tis the season for crèche suits, and this past December was no different. The Kentucky chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union filed suit against Gov. Wallace Wilkinson because the state constructed a Nativity scene on the front lawn of the Capitol in Frankfort. Children from the Good Shepherd School (Catholic) stood in for Joseph and Mary in a live reenactment of the Nativity on three occasions.

District Judge William O. Bertelsman found that the crèche could stand, but had some conditions: Kentucky must be reimbursed for the $2,400 it spent building the structure, it must also post a disclaimer stating that the crèche in no way constitutes an endorsement of Christianity by the state of Kentucky, and it must post another notice informing the public that the structure can be used by any group.

The judge also found as a fact that "an objective observer viewing the stable structure in the context of the holiday season and of its physical surroundings [i.e., surrounded by a Christmas tree, decorated lamp posts, and a snowflake floral clock] would interpret it not as an endorsement of religion or any religious doctrine, but merely as a reminder of the historical religious origins of Christmas." In other words, as some local commentators rephrased it, the district court was ruling that the crèche was not a religious symbol.

Idiotic as the ruling was, Judge Bertelsman was holding himself to precedent. In finding that the disclaimer was necessary because 1) an observer standing directly in front of the crèche could not see the surrounding Christmas tree and decorated drive, 2) and hence would see the crèche alone, 3) and hence might think Kentucky was endorsing Christianity, he was following the ruling in another 6th Circuit case (the ACLU v. *City of Birmingham*). There the court held that (to quote Bertelsman's wording) "unless a Nativity display was physically surrounded by secular decorations, it must be interpreted as constituting an endorsement of religion." My first question is, of course, why can't that hypothetical observer take a few steps to the side to catch the Christmas tree? But that's not really the problem here.

Judge Bertelsman was also following the standard established by Justice O'Connor in her concurring opinion to the 1984 Supreme Court decision on *Lynch* v. *Donnelly*. The majority held that this city-erected Nativity scene did not violate that Establishment Clause, but Justice O'Connor added that there should be an endorsement test: if in involving itself with a religious matter the government purposefully *or as a result of its practice* (irrespective of intent) could be found to be endorsing religion, then the crèche had to go.

Welcome to the world of law. No use asking why our ship of state has become a ship of fools who cannot coherently distinguish between the intent of the Establishment Clause — no state-sponsored religion — and a few days' worth of Catholic children playing Joseph and Mary on a state capitol's steps. Nor is it much help that several judges, justices, and other government officials have ducked the issue of religion to argue that a crèche or a cross is okay because it is a general, nonsectarian, historical rather than religious symbol. That is ridiculous.

Arguing for the retention of a Latin cross at a Marine base, former Marine Corps Commandant P.X. Kelley stated that the cross was "a nonsectarian symbol of hope" for families of Vietnam POW's and MIA's. The Jewish War Veterans had sued to have it removed, stating that it was a religious symbol. They were right, of course, that it is a religious symbol; they were wrong to begrudge a Christian memorial to a group of men who were probably mostly Christians. If the JWV is so offended, surely a better way for it to spend its money is erecting a Star of David in memory of dead Jewish veterans. Are we going to have to strip Arlington of its crosses now, since our tax dollars go to cut the grass? Should we be expecting suits against Corpus Christi, San Diego, and Los Angeles, so that any mention of a Higher Being can be literally wiped off the map?

With the unintentional irony that characterizes so much legal opinion these days, the most successful argument in the courts in defense of crèches, crosses, and menorahs has been the right to free speech. In other words, some judges are using the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment to outlaw religious symbols, while others are using the free speech clause — also in the First Amendment — to retain them. A Vermont judge ruled that a menorah in a city park was permissible because the park was traditionally a forum for free speech. A federal judge in Chicago ruled that a crèche (unencumbered by Santa or other secular symbols) could stand in a plaza across from city hall because that plaza, too, was a public forum. This seems a more reasonable argument; certainly it's a vast improvement on the Supreme Court's finding that a crèche is okay only when ringed by reindeer, because the nonreligious symbols gave even a religious symbol a "secular effect."

But it's not much. At issue is a more troubling question than free speech. From its very beginning the United States has been predominantly a nation of Christians. States like Kentucky are overwhelmingly Christian. If non-Christian minorities continue to make war on Christian symbolism, they do so at the risk of a backlash from the majority — as the ruckus in Kentucky over the case shows.

The Court may rule on another crèche case this month (the *City of Allegheny* v. *ACLU*). Unfortunately, all we can expect is more confusion. Organizations like the ACLU make things worse by pleading their cases

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not to local, elected officials, but by resorting to the courts, often federal courts. In the not-so-distant past it would have been clear that the courts had no jurisdiction here. If members of the Kentucky ACLU are horrified at the misuse of their state tax dollars, let them collect signatures and petition the governor. But if we permit the courts to continue to meddle in every aspect of state and local business, we undermine the very basis of self-government. (KD)

THE WASHINGTON POST is best known outside the newspaper business for the investigative reporting of Woodward and Bernstein—not to mention Janet Cooke. But in the long run, the *Post*'s most enduring achievement is that it pioneered the modern newspaper feature section.

Until the late 1960's, most features sections were called "women's pages," but when *Post* management introduced "Style" to its readers in 1969, the paper did more than change a title; it actually introduced the techniques of the "New Journalism" to a daily newspaper audience. Instead of simply covering trends in fashion or society, *Post* readers were treated to first-person adventures and profiles of the rich, famous, and powerful.

The "Style" formula proved so successful that other major dailies gradually changed their women's pages to the *Post*'s model. Today, feature editors nationally recognize the *Post* as *primus inter pares*. "Style," for example, routinely wins many awards at the annual competition for feature writing sponsored by the University of Missouri's journalism school. And most dailies still derive most of their form and content from the ideas first developed in the "Style" section.

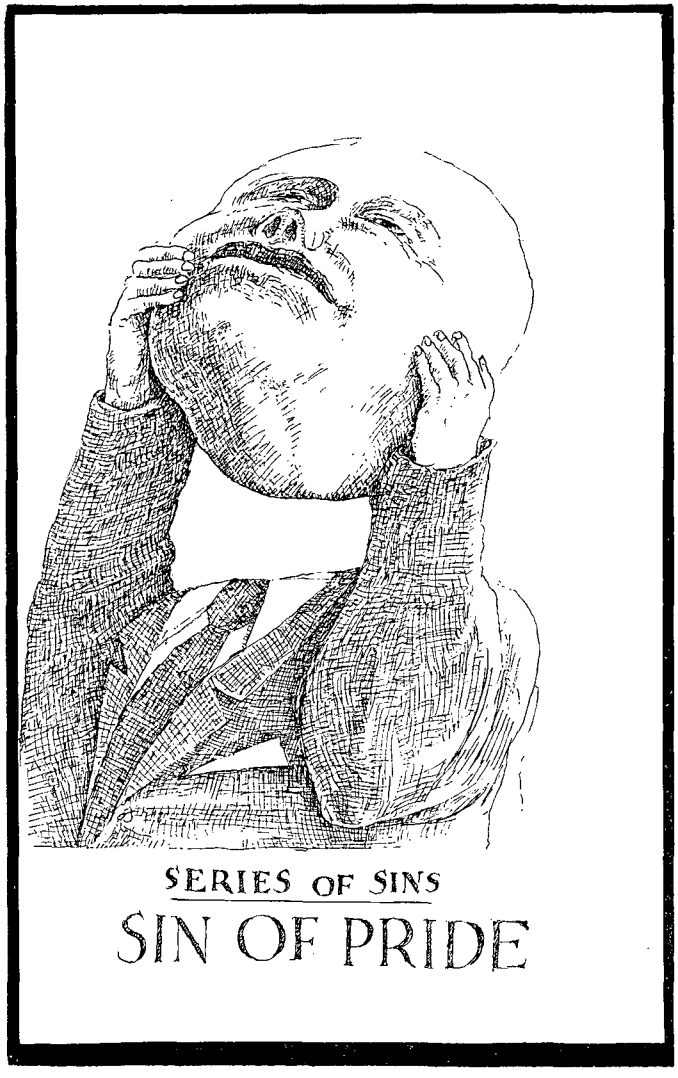
But in the 1980's, "Style" has lost its way. Most of the *Post*'s better feature writers have left, lured by book deals, Hollywood, and at least one syndicated column (Judith Martin, otherwise known as "Miss Manners"). But the crisis in "Style" is more than the need to replace writers. By now even the *Post*'s editors have realized they are facing a deeper problem: trivialization. At the recent winter retreat (known as "Pugwash"), senior *Post* editors analyzed the "Style" section. The report, reprinted in Washington's *City Paper*, is not flattering.

According to the Pugwash document, several times a week top "Style" editors review two lists. One list consists of forthcoming films, television shows, plays, and parties; the second list consists of "celebrities who have been 'offered' to the *Post* for interviews." People or events on the list are assigned or rejected; what survives usually becomes the subject of a *Post* article. As a result, most "Style" articles are either "mega-event" stories reported by most media outlets (a presidential inauguration, a summit conference), or profiles and interviews.

In 1988, the *Post* published 165 lengthy profiles. Of these, 90 were pieces "about people with something to sell"—actors, authors, painters, musicians. In 1988, "Style" writers only profiled one educator, one religious leader, two scientists (one of whom was hawking a book), and two businessmen.

The Pugwash report closed with a list of story ideas for "Style" reporters to pursue. Among them was a plea for "Style" to produce more stories about "interesting developments" in "sociology, psychology, politics, science, family life, sex, religion, letters, education." "Why does Style so rarely write about the world of ideas and the people who have them?" one reporter asked the *Post* panel.

The answer has two parts. Many journalists are afraid of people in "the world of ideas." For many journalists, ideas are homework, and homework is something to be avoided—the only lesson many journalists learned in college. "Style" editors, one "Style" writer told the panel, "all read the same things: *Time*, *Newsweek*, *People*, *Roll-*



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ing Stone, Village Voice." Nothing, in short, that would be difficult or demanding, nothing with solid information as opposed to opinion.

Conservatives frequently complain that they are shut out of America's newspapers by "liberal media bias." The Pugwash report makes it clear that "Style" editors are not ideologues, but airheads, biased against *anyone* who doesn't have a press agent. The reason Jeremy Rifkin is profiled in *The Washington Post* and Robert Nisbet isn't is due, not to political bias, but to Jeremy Rifkin's publicists.

Liberals and corporate drones also dominate daily newspaper feature sections for another reason. Most rising young conservative journalists are not interested in culture or even news. The number of conservative journalists under the age of 35 who do *not* work as editorial writers can be counted on the fingers of one hand. In a world interested only in a battle of opinions, not ideas, the most serious casualties include the responsible press and a voting public that is being fed PR in the guise of news.

—*Martin Morse Wooster*

LAURIE A. RECHT, a legal secretary in New York, received encomiums from the press and various and sundry others for endorsing the court-ordered plan for integrated housing in Yonkers last year. In fact, when Ms. Recht was the only speaker in favor of the integration proposal at an open hearing, arguing that the City Council in defying the court order "was doing something illegal, immoral, and unethical," she was informally nominated by the media as the champion of compliance and good sense in what was otherwise a vitriolic and divisive argument.

After her triumphant speech Ms. Recht claimed she was harassed by crank callers who left nasty messages on her answering machine and by someone who sprayed a swastika on the wall outside the apartment of her Yonkers residence. In addition, she claimed to have received death threats by mail after speaking in favor of the scattered-site low income housing project in the predominantly white neighborhood of East Yonkers. She described these acts against her as "cowardly" conduct "by insecure people who don't have to guts to discuss the issue or face me."

For her outspokenness and courage in the face of threats and for being "the lone voice of reason," according to a New York newspaper, Ms. Recht was granted an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from the College of New Rochelle last May 29. At the commencement Sister Dorothy Ann Kelly, president of the college, said this incident in Yonkers recalled Pope John XXIII saying that people who address inequities are "far too few in number, yet they are deserving of the highest recognition from society." Ms. Recht was given a standing ovation from faculty members and students.

After the degree was conferred, a police investigation uncovered the culprit behind Ms. Recht's harassment: Ms. Recht. The police report indicated that she sent herself the death threats, recorded the crank calls, and probably painted the swastika in her hallway. It was also argued that Ms. Recht's testimony at the open hearing was designed for self-aggrandizement.

If that was Ms. Recht's goal, she certainly achieved it. However, the real question that emerges from this incident is why the College of New Rochelle reacted with such haste to confer an honorary degree. The most sensible answer is that the college was eager to use an honor as a way of making a highly political judgment.

One could say the Recht case has its analogue in the Joyce Brown (AKA Billie Boggs) case. After winning her suit against New York City for illegal detainment as a public nuisance, Brown was invited to speak at Harvard University. Ms. Brown was not given an honorary degree, but she was honored by faculty members and students and she was offered a forum for her views that included television coverage. Two months after this appearance at Harvard, Ms. Brown was arrested for selling drugs and was subsequently apprehended for harassing passersby on the street.

If any condition exemplifies the ideological ardor on campus, it is the urge to honor those whose views fall neatly into the institutional catechism. And if ever one needed a justification for cynicism about what transpires at our campuses, here it is.

—*Herbert I. London*

A LOT OF AMERICANS are worried about the way universities are teaching our children. During the second weekend of November 1988, equally concerned members of the National Association of Scholars gathered at the old Roosevelt Hotel in New York City.

There are clearly quite a few articulate, thoughtful scholars in our colleges and universities on whom presidents and regents can call to provide the leadership that is needed to take us out of our current morass. No one who heard young historian Alan Kors (Pittsburgh) tell of his stand against campus radicals will doubt that strong leadership can help a school begin the slow, gradual return to high academic standards. No one who heard Jeane Kirkpatrick (Georgetown) tell of the suppression of free speech on campuses will doubt the need. But do presidents and regents care?

One does. The speech John Silber, president of Boston University, gave was a revelation. Silber told us clearly and forcefully why the humanities, in the broadest sense, are at the heart of any curriculum worthy of the name. He paused to explain how even a poem as simple and touching as Milton's sonnet on his late wife was incomprehensible to someone who did not know Greek myth and Greek literature. He reminded us that a liberal education in the literature and values of our society is a debt we owe our children. An academic leader who possesses eloquence, wisdom, and passion is a *rara avis*. Silber can be justifiably compared to Daniel Coit Gilman, William Rainey Harper, or other men who created the great American universities.

If the squabbling in today's universities is a free-for-all between liberals and radicals about who is going to get to propagandize our children, the ultimate victory is of little concern to the average American, not to mention the putative nonexistent academic conservative. The debate ought to be over the introduction of adequate objective standards of academic expertise for both teaching and research. I am not sure what the proper standards for the social sciences should be, but in the humanities they should include command of relevant foreign languages, publication in refereed presses and

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journals, and winning extramural grants. I am not surprised that *The New Republic* once devoted a lead editorial to denouncing publication in academe. It is shocking that Lynne Cheney would repeat the baseless assertions that there is too much attention to research in today's universities and that what little research goes on hurts teaching. The recent report from the American Council of Learned Societies, *Speaking for the Humanities*, reminds us (from Martin Finkelstein via Andrew Hacker) that "more than half of all professors devote fewer than five hours a week to research, while upward of a third admit to none at all." When the chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities can write, "it is important to recognize that research and learning need not always involve publication," she is driving a stake into the heart of the only source of objective standards in academia. *De facto*, she is asking that our children be taught what people who have never wrestled aggressively with great literature remember from their graduate school lectures. It is important to recognize that most people who are not creative as scholars dry up as teachers.

The good news is that the leadership is there, from university presidents like John Silber to humanities scholars like Charles Moser (George Washington) in Slavic and Rufus Fears (Boston University) in classics, on to the many social scientists who are ready and willing to stand up for standards. The bad news is that the Trojan Horse—hatred of minimal standards—is inside the gates of Troy. Ulysses and Neoptolemus are exulting. Priam and Deiphobus are slain. What is Aeneas to do?

—*E. Christian Kopff*

CHILD ABUSE has become a national issue. But close scrutiny of the problem raises doubts about the current crusade to combat it. Before expanding the power of the state to intervene in the home, concerned citizens ought to take a hard look at the evidence.

While it is hardly possible to overstate the horror of many particular instances—children mutilated, scalded, beaten, and murdered—serious child abuse does not occur as often as some journalists and government officials would have us believe. Of the 2.1 million children who were reported to state authorities in 1986 as abused or neglected, only about 30 percent had been physically abused (and only about 10 percent of those children—3 percent of the total—had suffered an injury serious enough to require professional attention). According to Douglas Besharov, former director of the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect, "nine-tenths of the cases labeled 'physical abuse' are really situations of excessive or unreasonable corporal punishment that, although a legitimate matter of government concern, are unlikely to develop into a dangerous assault against a child."

Far more numerous than the instances of serious child abuse are the false allegations of child abuse. Nationwide, approximately 65 percent of all reports of child abuse and neglect are dismissed as "unfounded" after official investigation. But even if exonerated, those falsely accused of child abuse must submit to an intrusive and potentially traumatic investigation. Investigators routinely strip-search the children involved and question parents in detail about private conduct. Unwarranted suspicions may also be planted in the minds of neighbors, teachers, and relatives who are questioned about any peculiarities they may have noted in a child's behavior. In some cases, children have been preemptively removed from a home, only to be returned much later after a lengthy investigation has established that the initial charges were false.

Nor can it be assumed that the innocent are always cleared by investigators. Frequently, those accused of child abuse are presumed guilty until proven innocent. Most state statutes provide only the foggiest definition of child abuse and neglect, permitting state workers and judges unprecedented latitude in determining the guilt of the parents. Poor families find it especially hard to establish their innocence of noncriminal neglect. The rights of the accused are further jeopardized by child-abuse statutes allowing the courts to recognize a lower standard of evidence than that allowed in criminal proceedings. Parents can lose their children without facing a single criminal charge.

Amid all the furor caused by inflated numbers and false accusations, few can think clearly about the root causes of child abuse. In fact, many leaders of the campaign against child abuse are keeping strangely quiet about important research into its underlying causes. Contrary to the frequent claim that mistreatment of children occurs equally among all social groups, national statistics reveal that families reported for abuse or neglect are four times as likely to be on public assistance as the general population. Researchers in this country, Canada, and Europe are also discovering that child abuse is far less likely to occur in intact families than in stepfamilies or single-parent homes. A 1985 study found that the risk of abuse was 40 times higher for a stepchild than for a child living with both natural parents. According to a 1985 study for the National Institute for Mental Health, violence against children actually appears to be decreasing in America's intact families.

In perhaps the most provocative study to date, researchers at the University of New Mexico recently reported in the *American Sociological Review* that internationally the murder of children is linked to rising female employment. At a time when child psychologists are discovering that day care often weakens maternal bonding to infants, researchers are stressing the importance of healthy parent-infant bonds as a safeguard against abuse.

Many children need protection, and state officials should help provide it. But to protect children properly, government must do more to shield innocent parents from false accusations, and society must address the cultural causes of abuse.

—*Bryce J. Christensen*

FAITHFUL READERS of *Chronicles* will have noticed our newly-instituted "Letter From Washington," written by contributing editor Sam Francis. In February the same Dr. Francis won the American Society of Newspaper Editors' Distinguished Writing Award for his editorials in *The Washington Times*. This is a prestigious award and well deserved; we who bash so many awards are nevertheless very happy when the rest of the world appreciates one of our own.

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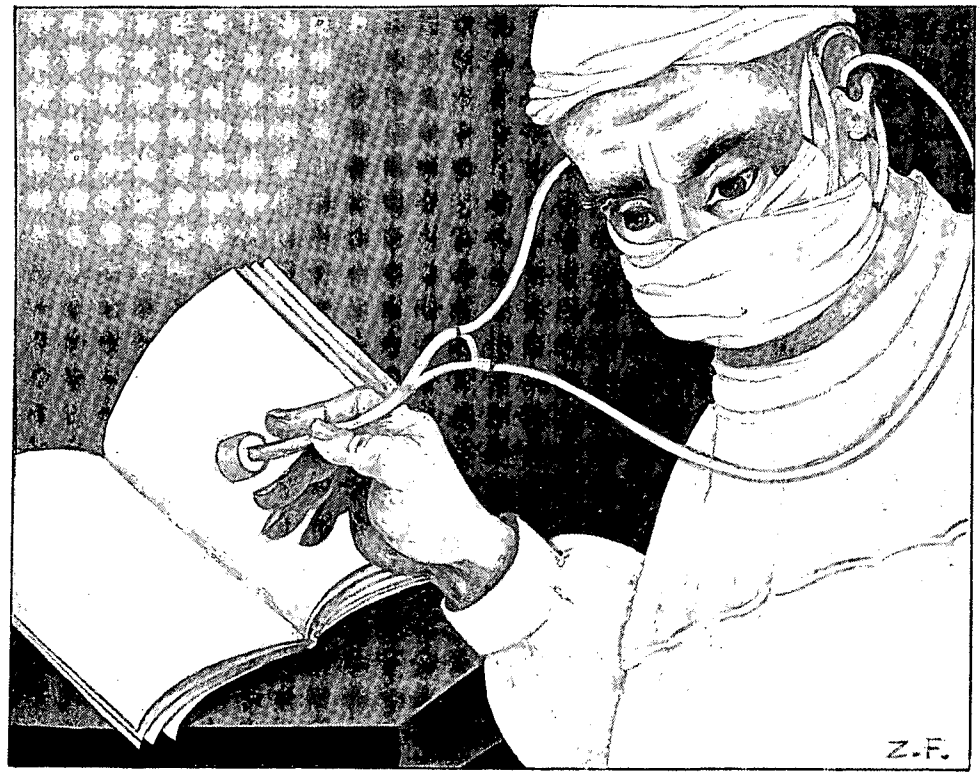

Physician as Novelist

or

Why the Best Training for a Novelist in These Last Years of the 20th Century is an Internship at Bellevue or Cook County Hospital, and How This Training Best Prepares Him for Diagnosing T.S. Eliot's 'Waste Land'

by Walker Percy

But let us speak of vocations. What one ends up doing with one's life is surely one of God's mysteries. And a good deal of luck, good luck and bad luck, is involved as well as, I firmly believe, God's providence.

Who among us is doing what he, she, dreamed of doing when he, she, was 8, 12, 16? Perhaps it is just as well we are not. At 12 I wanted to fly the Pacific because Lindbergh had flown the Atlantic.

I'd like to share with you some of the misfortunes, peculiar turns of fate, and finally the piece of luck or Divine Providence, as the case may be, by which I turned out doing what I am doing, something that had never occurred to me to do, not once in my wildest dreams, but that I like doing, not because I do it all that well but because I am incompetent doing anything else.

Growing up, I was a reluctant attendant at Sunday school and a secret devotee of science, or what I took to be science. My favorite writer in my teens was H.G. Wells, who believed that all events in the cosmos, even human history, can be explained by natural science, and a rather crude science at that.

Actually it is not a bad way to grow up in the 20th century, an age that will certainly be known—if we

Walker Percy is the author of The Moviegoer, The Last Gentleman, *and* The Thanatos Syndrome. *He was the winner of the 1988 T.S. Eliot Award, for which this was his acceptance speech.*

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survive—not only for its tragedies, millions dead from its great wars and the Holocaust, but for its spectacular scientific advances, from the study of subatomic particles to the exploration into the far reaches of the cosmos. The best of our time is marked by the truth and beauty of science as surely as the cathedral at Chartres is the high-water mark of the 13th century.

But what I wish to propose to you is this: that for a certain type of educated denizen of this age it is only through, first, the love of the scientific method and, second, through its elevation and exhaustion as the ultimate method of knowing that he becomes open to other forms of knowing—sciencing in the root sense of the word—and accordingly, at least I think so, to a new kind of revival of Western humanism and the Judeo-Christian tradition—again, if we survive.

A large order. And of course I am not suggesting that one cannot be raised a believing Presbyterian, Jew, or Catholic, or as an unbelieving humanist or simply as a passive consumer, and live happily ever after in one's faith or nonfaith without a second thought about the prevailing scientism of the age.

No, I am speaking of a rather more typical denizen of the age who believes, as part of the very air he breathes, that natural science has the truth, all the truth, and that the rest—religion, humanism, art—are icing on the cognitive cake; attractive icing, yes, but icing nonetheless, which is to say, noncognitive icing, emotional icing.

Notice that I distinguish here between scientism as an all-pervading ideology and the scientific method as a valid means of investigating the mechanisms of phenomena.

But please allow me, after the fashion of physicians, to relate a short history.

Here is a young man, a disciple and devotee of science, whose education has been thoroughly scientific, who settles on medicine as his vocation and chooses a medical school famous for its scientific approach to medicine as the study of the mechanism of disease.

Then, early on, his career is cut short by a serious, disabling, but nonfatal illness. What to do? In the end he returns to the South and changes professions, decides to become a writer—in the South at least, still an honorable profession.

But how to go about it? The long and short of it: he writes two novels, one a bad imitation of Thomas Mann, the other a worse imitation of Thomas Wolfe—which is very bad indeed. But no luck. Some kind words from publishers, but no deal.

What to do now? To cut it even shorter: after much casting about and considerable depression if not despair, the thought finally occurred to this fellow—by luck or by providence—why not forget about other writers, however distinguished, and go your own way? What was there to lose? Wasn't this what Newton, Darwin, and Freud had done in science?

And so it came to pass that he wrote a short novel in which he created a character, an amiable but slightly bemused young man of a certain upper-class Southern background, and set him down in Gentilly, a middle-class district of New Orleans, in order to see what would happen to him. For he has given up on the usual verities—home, family, church, country—and instead elects a solitary existence of selling stocks and bonds to the local burghers, hiring a succession of lovely secretaries, and—going to the movies. He enjoys bad movies.

◆

The physician-novelist is not in the business of writing edifying tales. It is enough for him to have discovered and put his finger on the peculiar lesion of the age.

◆

What happens to him is that in the very anxiety of his despair, cool as it is—indeed as the very consequence of his despair—it occurs to him that a *search* is possible, a search altogether different from the scientific explorations mounted by scientists or by the most perceptive of psychoanalysts. So the novel, almost by accident, became a narrative of the search, the quest. And so the novel, again almost by accident—or was it accident?—landed squarely in the oldest tradition of Western letters: the pilgrim's search outside himself rather than the guru's search within. All this happened to the novelist and his character without the slightest consciousness of a debt to St. Augustine or Dante. Indeed, the character creates within himself and within the confines of a single weekend in New Orleans a microcosm of the spiritual history of the West, from the Roman patrician reading his Greek philosophers to the 13th century pilgrim who leaves home and takes to the road.

But as a physician, perhaps I can give a more respectable analysis of this case history, after the fashion of professors in the amphitheater discussing a case after the patient has been wheeled out.

My point is that the stance of the physician is appropriate here. For his stance is that of the diagnostician. A diagnostician is a person who stands toward another person in the relation of one who knows that something has gone wrong with the other. He, the physician-novelist, has a nose for pathology.

In his case, that of the physician-novelist, the pathology he discovers in his characters has afflicted the very society that surrounds him. It might be called scientism or, perhaps more accurately, what Whitehead called the Misplaced Concrete. What he, Whitehead, had in mind was not the truth and beauty of the scientific method, but a certain abstractedness and disorientation that follows upon the elevation of science to an all-enveloping ideology. One looks at an amoeba and sees it as an example of, a specimen of, a biological class. Very good. One looks at a fellow human being and sees him, her, as a typical example of a certain sort of outgoing Midwesterner, or perhaps a recognizable specimen of a sardonic, backward-looking Southerner. Not so good. For what one is missing is precisely that which makes this specimen human, his uniqueness.

So what I have in mind here is the imperial decree of scientism (not of science) to discredit other ways of knowing.

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In a word, a respectable epistemological word, what he, the novelist's character, discovers in his search is that there are other ways of knowing not only quite as valid as scientific propositions, but of far more critical significance in one's personal life.

Thus, while he had admitted all along the universal validity of such sentences as "The square of the hypotenuse equals the sum of the square of the other two sides," or, "Water boils at 100 degrees centigrade at sea level," now all at once he, the novelist's character, the pilgrim-searcher, is able to take note of other kinds of sentences that he had ignored before. Perhaps in his wanderings he encounters another person. The stranger has an unusual air about him. He is onto something. But he is not a guru who conveys to him some universal truths about the self and the cosmos. No; he, the stranger, is a newsbearer, and of all things news of an event in history. News? History? Hardly the stuff of empirically verifiable scientific sentences.

The stranger is not importunate. He is serious but almost offhand in his manner, smiling. "I have something to tell you," he says to the pilgrim. "A piece of news. It is of great importance to you. Whether or not you choose to believe me is your affair."

Perhaps the pilgrim does not believe the stranger, as well he might not. Let me note here what is extremely important and the source of much confusion. The physician-novelist is not himself a newsbearer, and he is not in the business of writing edifying tales. He has other fish to fry. It is enough for him to have discovered and put his finger on the peculiar lesion of the age. Perhaps by this very act the abscess is lanced, the ear drained so that the patient, whatever else he might do, can at least hear. Nevertheless the physician, insofar as he is a novelist, is in the business of diagnosis, not therapy.

Like all artists, he is interested not in edifying, but in discovering and pointing out and naming certain sectors of reality, both within oneself and outside oneself, which had gone unnoticed. Whereupon he, the novelist's character, is free, as only a man can be free, to act accordingly.

But—and I can hear the question despite my disavowals—what are you suggesting? Are you suggesting that one must be a believing Jew or Christian to write good novels? Certainly not—though one is tempted to make the case and indeed present the evidence that the Jewish novelist, secular or religious, has a certain advantage, what with his unique placement in a strictly linear time and history. By a "certain view of reality" I am speaking of the linearity of history, the density of things and events, the mystery and uniqueness of persons, a view that seems natural to us but is in fact the cultural heritage of Judeo-Christianity. Which is to say that I haven't read any good Buddhist novels lately. It is to say also that B.F. Skinner, who believed that all life is a matter of stimuli and responses, could not possibly write a good novel—though I believe in fact that he did try. It is to say that the novels of H.G. Wells could not possibly be otherwise than as bad as they are. And I have never read a Marxist novel without being overwhelmed by the thesis.

Finally, it also helps the novelist to have interned at Bellevue or at Cook County Hospital. For one develops a nose for pathology. And it is only when one sees that something is wrong that one can diagnose it, point it out and name it, toward the end that the patient might at least have hope, and even in the end get well.

LIBERAL ARTS

ON AMERICAN LETTERS

Much has been said, of late, about the necessity of maintaining a proper *nationality* in American Letters; but what this nationality *is*, or what is to be gained from it, has never been distinctly understood. That an American should confine himself to American themes, or even prefer them, is rather a political than a literary idea—and at best is a questionable point. We would do well to bear in mind that "distance lends enchantment to the view." *Ceteris paribus*, a foreign theme is, in a strictly literary sense, to be preferred. After all, the world at large is the only legitimate stage for the autorial *histrio*.

But of the need of *that* nationality which defends our own literature, sustains our own men of letters, upholds our own dignity, and depends upon our own resources, there cannot be the shadow of a doubt. Yet here is the very point at which we are most supine. We complain of our want of an International Copyright, on the ground that this want justifies our publishers in inundating us with British opinion in British books; and yet when these very publishers, at their own obvious risk, and even obvious loss, do publish an American book, we turn up our noses at it with supreme contempt (this as a general thing) until it (the American book) has been dubbed "readable" by some illiterate Cockney critic. Is it too much to say that, with us, the opinion of Washington Irving—of Prescott—of Bryant—is a mere nullity in comparison with that of any anonymous sub-sub-editor of The Spectator, The Athenaeum or the "London Punch"? It is *not* saying too much, to say this. It is a solemn—an absolutely awful fact. Every publisher in the country will admit it to be a fact. There is not a more disgusting spectacle under the sun than our subserviency to British criticism. It is disgusting, first, because it is truckling, servile, pusillanimous—secondly, because of its gross irrationality. We *know* the British to bear us little but ill will—we know that, in no case, do they utter unbiased opinions of American books—we know that in the few instances in which our writers have been treated with common decency in England, these writers have either openly paid homage to English institutions, or have had lurking at the bottom of their hearts, a secret principle at war with Democracy:—we *know* all this, and yet, day after day, submit our necks to the degrading yoke of the crudest opinion that emanates from the fatherland. Now if we *must* have nationality let it be a nationality that will throw off this yoke.

—*Edgar Allan Poe in the Broadway Journal, 1845*

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The Knoll

by Tom Murray

The knoll, the firs with space between,
Came not by accident.
Landlord or tenant with inner eye had seen
What a far-off future might present
Against hills, lake-water, the nearer green.

For centuries the track, the path and then
The road were trained to curve
Around the hillside where it dropped to marsh and fen
And generations of man and beast had learned to swerve
Leftwards and, with wary vision, scan

For what might lie beyond. But also found,
Drawing the mind from watch and care,
Beauty that started from the seeded ground,
Branches patterned upon the bright or sullen air,
And forms that man had framed upon a mound

He himself had made. For here the roadman's spade
Had cast and raised the shifted earth,
Here the seed had sown the long years-after shade,
And here, in time of dearth,
A respite unpredictable had made.

On summer afternoons, their dark work done,
Dayshift colliers, in quest
Of light and unfouled air and even clouded sun
Once slowly walked and here lay down. "The
Miners' Rest".
Became its name. True enough, as one,

For here, from tipsters' columns closely read
And traced with Woodbine-browned forefinger,
They'd place threepence on an Ascot thoroughbred,
Argue about centre-forwards and linger
Over far-off football fields they'd
never hope to tread

There's less dearth now: of colliers not a sign:
Even the sheep have found more favoured grass.
The knoll, the spaced-out firs spread their design
In vain. Today's motorist is intent only to pass
The lurching lorry straddling the road's white line.

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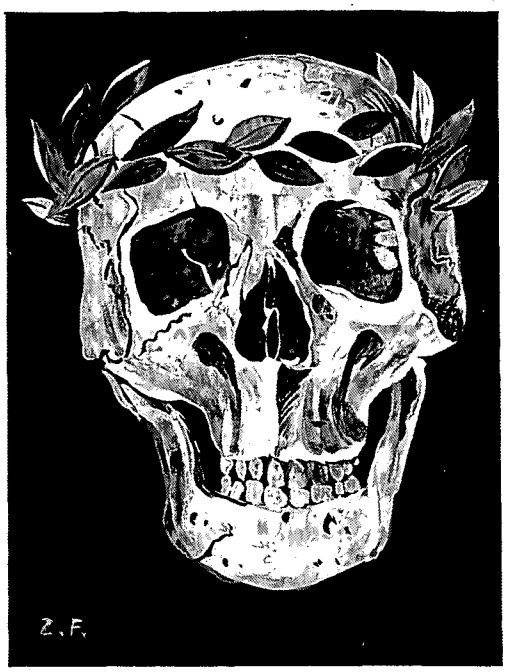

Voices

An Excerpt From 'Entered From the Sun'

by George Garrett

Hunnyman Examined

"Are you acquainted with Christopher Marlowe?"

"The poet?"

"The same."

"I am surprised you do not speak of him in the past tense. He has been dead for some while."

"Since May of '93, as it happens."

"Well, then," Hunnyman tells the young man. "At that same time our company was performing in the North."

"On account of the Plague."

"That summer we went as far north as Carlisle."

"Plague did not kill Christopher Marlowe."

"So we heard."

"What news did you hear?"

"One thing and another. That, most likely, he was killed in a drunken brawl."

"Did that surprise you?"

"The man had a choleric temper and more than a full share of bad habits."

"True enough."

"Besides which by then I had already arrived at the age when any truly surprising things are few and far between."

"Do my questions surprise you?"

Hunnyman chooses to answer this time with some caution.

"I confess I am troubled by some doubts. I cannot conceive what it is you want to hear from me."

"Only the truth."

Here Hunnyman allows himself the relief of a faint, brief smile and the slightest kind of shrug.

"Why, then, I am happy to oblige you," he says.

"If, as it seems, you are seeking to find someone who knew Marlowe well, why, you have made a mistake. It is true that I am . . . or, more truthfully, that I have been from time to time, a player. And I think it would be remarkable to find any player alive in England—be he apprentice, hireling, or full sharer—who is altogether ignorant of Marlowe's plays. Is there any company, large or small, celebrated or obscure, which has not, one way or another, and in one version or another, performed his plays and earned both profit and applause for their efforts? I doubt it. Is there a living poet in England who has not flattered Marlowe and

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Entered From the Sun *is George Garrett's new book, to be published later this year.*

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honored his memory by trying to imitate the matter of his plays and the thunder and lightning, the drums and trumpets and gunpowder blasts of his words? Not to my knowledge. There was a time, believe me, sir, and it has not yet fully dissipated, either, when all that the managers wished to see and to consider for performance was something or other, anything really, which had at least the counterfeit sound and echo of Marlowe in the lines and some shadowy copy of the astonishing spectacle of his fables.

"I am telling you no news there.

"For a little time, not for longer than that in this foolish age of fashion, when fashions in all things flare and blaze and, poof!, are gone forever, for a time the poetry of Marlowe was the very model and fashion for most of us. Not many can or ever will equal that influence.

"And though it may seem to you, sir, as it does to many men (who can say which?) that there is a kind of army of common players and suchlike, men without honest craft or employment, in this weary kingdom, though it may well seem to you, sir, that we are as thick and noisy and annoying and dangerous to the good order of things as a cloud of locusts on the wind, the truth is (and you asked me for the truth, did you not?) that we are few enough in number and, despite many differences of degree and of good fortune, are joined together in a kind of shadowy commonwealth. We are brothers in general disrepute if not always in adversity. And because we are few, we are much concerned, indeed fascinated to the edges of obsession, by all the bits and pieces of news of our little world. Rumor, bruit, and alewife's gossip, these are among our greatest pleasures.

"Sometimes, to the more notorious among us, this can be a kind of tribulation. For I do believe, sir, that there is no man (no woman, either, for that matter) in all this kingdom, perhaps in the wide world as well, who would not relish the prospect of good report, good repute, and good fame among his fellows.

"Consider that we live in an age in which, shall we agree on it?, good fame seems to be desired by almost everyone, from turnspits to dancing masters, from jakesmen to great Lords and even, God save us all, by common stageplayers.

"But if it is good fame that we desire for ourselves, it is nevertheless the ill fame of others, our enemies and rivals, which gives us most pleasure. Good fortune is not half so happy as it is when it can be, like the sweet rose in its nest of thorns, surrounded by the misery and bad fortune of others."

"I think you may be wrong in that last supposition. But never mind. Pray continue."

"I have reached the age—and I am not old yet by any means—when I never feel quite so much fully alive as when I hear the news of the death of one enemy or another. Sometimes it even pleases me to contemplate the death of my friends."

"Marlowe?"

"In that case, believe me, neither my friend nor enemy, but someone else, someone celebrated for the good fame of his words. But, why deny it?, the old black trumpet of ill fame loudly saluted many things he said and did."

"Are you thinking of the buggery of boys?"

Most cautious again. Who could tell what the habits and frailties of this handsome young man, his abductor and interrogator, might be?

"I am well aware, sir, that the practices you refer to, together with others of the like, are widely known to be unnatural and, in the eyes of every kind of Christian church and sect, to be mortal sins. And in the Law are most grievous crimes and most grievously punished."

"But?"

"Sir?"

"But what?"

"But, sir, I have lived long enough in the wicked world to know that there are many creatures of God who are so swept and overcome by strange hungers and sinful appetites as to be undeterred from these practices by fear of any earthly or eternal punishment. It's a pity, but the truth."

"And was Marlowe one of these?"

"I have heard so, but have no evidence of the truth or falsehood of the rumor.

"It is undeniably true that he earned himself considerable ill fame on account of what he was supposed to have said and done. And we often talked of him in those days as if he were a kind of player playing the role of himself. In our talk and minds he became one of those paradoxical beings who so often seem to be appropriate emblems for our wicked age, these dying times. He was a stranger whom we came to imagine that we knew well.

"Having said all that, I have to say, also, sir, that I have indeed seen the man in flesh and blood, when he still had living flesh to wear around his bones. Perhaps a dozen times in a dozen different places. Taverns and playhouses usually. Yet only as a face among a crowd of faces, somehow seeming oddly familiar because of his fame. In all my life I spoke to him only once or twice, exchanging maybe a dozen or two of inconsequential words. If he had outlived his last brawl (if brawling was truly the death of him) and if he were here instead of myself, I am certain he could neither recall my name nor my face. Not even if he were being tortured to encourage recollection.

"In long and short then, sir, I find I knew a good deal, much of it indifferently true or false, with myself not caring ripe figs or farts to distinguish between the two, about Marlowe. But no, sir, I did not truly know him nor could I, in any serious sense, claim him for an acquaintance."

"Were you surprised at how he died?"

"Well, sir, it did seem . . . how shall I say it? . . . a fitting end for his story."

"And you felt neither sorrow nor regret?"

"Why should I?"

"Not an answer to what I asked you."

"Very well, then. I felt nothing at all at the time and have felt nothing since then. Other deaths have moved me and wounded me. When Marlowe died, I had no place in my heart to mourn the fate of strangers."

"And did you ever hear anything as to why Marlowe might have been murdered?"

"You are asking me to try and remember what was of no consequence to me at the time."

"What was it you heard?"

"Well, finally, after all the rumors and wild tales, only what the Coroner's jury found. That it was self-defense.

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That the man who killed him—his name escapes me now, if I ever heard it or knew of it. . . ."

"Frizer. A man called Ingram Frizer."

"If you say so."

"Does the name mean anything to you?"

"Nothing at all. I reasonably assumed at the time that this man (Frizer did you say?) was not likely to be a worthy fellow of an enviable good repute."

"Upon what grounds?"

"Kind of place it was. Kind of company he was keeping."

"Please continue."

"All that I ever heard was that a jury found Frizer acted in self-defense when he killed Marlowe."

"Do you believe that?"

"There is nothing for me to believe or to disbelieve. I take it for what it is, the finding of a jury in a certain case. So be it."

"Do you care?"

"You keep prodding me in the matter of my caring or not caring. How can I make this clear and simple to you, sir?

"Look you. You—or, anyway, in your name and at your orders it has been done—have had me seized off the street and dragged and carried away against my will, and in dire peril of my good health and welfare, to this place, this cold bright cellar. Here you have told me more about myself than you have any good right to know. Here you have threatened me in plain fact and by implication. Here you have kindly served me strong wine—and a very good sack it is, too—to loosen my tongue even as it clouds over the brightness of my mind. And you have examined me closely concerning my knowledge, and the lack of it, of a dead man, a dissolute poet, a man of great gifts and many serious vices. A man who may be sorely missed by someone or other, but not so by me.

"And now, sir, do you know what I have come to think?"

"Pray tell me."

"I have learned that your interest in me derives mainly from the matter of the life and death of Christopher Marlowe. And I know for certain and can cheerfully tell you that you have managed, by an easy enough error, to take the wrong man to serve your purposes. If only I could serve you, I would gladly do so, if only for the sake of my hide and hair. But since I know nothing beyond what I have already said, I can only plead with you, sir, to acknowledge your error and let me be. Let me go about my humble business. Please, sir, give me leave to depart this place and I do solemnly promise to forget that any of this happened."

"Are you finished speaking?"

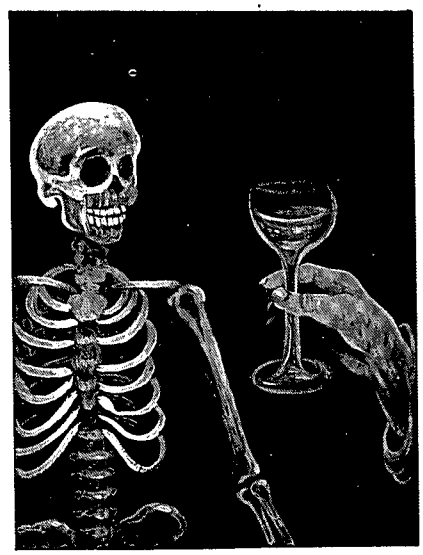
"Is there anything left to be said?"

"Not by you, John Hunnyman. And now it is my turn. To tell you that you have somewhat misjudged us and our intentions and have under-valued yourself. Everything that has been said here tonight confirms that you are the man we hoped that you would be. And so I deem that you are precisely the man to perform the task at hand."

"What is it you want me to do?"

"To find out how Marlowe was really killed. And why."

Captain Barfoot's Tavern Talk



Like so many people, great and small, virtuous and wicked, young and old, in this late age of the world (and there are many who profess to believe this world will end with the old century and with the reign of our old Queen), like so many others, William Barfoot is not what he seems to be. It is his way to pretend to be, in truth, something more and less than he is. And what he truly is no man alive, perhaps not even the Captain, himself, knows with any surety. He is probably a dangerous man, considering the size, the look, the style of him. But who knows? Who would ever wish to find out?

Meantime, however, among his handful of tavern friends, he is taken to be a creature of contradictions. Taken, also, to be a creature of habit. But he breaks his own habits and customs as often as he knows them.

The Captain is not, in truth, a man of idle talk or many

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words. And facile or clever talkers, together with tellers of elaborate tales, will fist his face into a frown.

Captain Barfoot has a frown which can silence a tavern.

And yet he has been known, stepping into the very silence he, himself, has created, as if he were a man stepping out of the dark and into lantern light, to talk as if the only thing which stood between him and sudden death was the shield of his words.

Here, for example, is one of his digressions on the subject of the wisdom of wounds:

"It is the folly of most healthy men to consider that those who have suffered from long illness or those who have earned a rich reward of scabs and scars (if nothing much else) in this vain, hurtful world, are somehow more fortunate, as if blessed with an acquired coat of hardness like a snail in his castle or a turtle in his shell. That they may be perhaps somewhat like the saints. That is to say, enabled to be careless.

"Having lost so much to predatory time and tribulation, they are left with much less to lose now. Precious little to fret over or about. Having tasted the worst which fever and chills, cuts and bruises and broken bones can offer a man, why they are imagined, deemed likely to be fearless ever after. Having met with the dark man in the dark and wrestled him to the very edge of the pit of hell, then risen up again, not from the dead, but, anyway, risen up into light from darkness, and not whole, either, but touched and changed by the closeness of Death, just as Jacob was touched and shriveled by his Angel, they are believed by others to be in possession of a rare kind of knowledge, not wisdom, but a deep way of knowing taught in and by the school of hard experience. Which knowledge, it is believed, leaves them somehow or other less vulnerable to future wounds than others who have been spared. Leaves them, after all is said and done, blithely willing and able to embrace any kind of pain and discomfort.

"Leaves them on good terms, then, if not intimately friendly with Death. Who having failed the first time will now be kind, no doubt, and take them away, bootless, in their sleep, with no more noise or shuddering than a cat's breath.

"It is a pretty kind of fiction.

"Do not believe any of it."

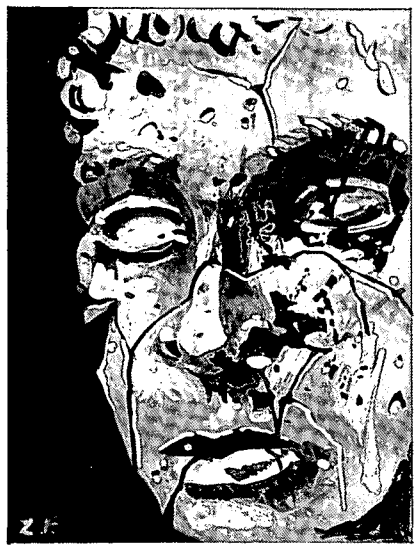
By now this hard-faced, scarred and battered man has all who are present staring at his visible scars and lumps and hurt places. Almost in envy.

"You want to know the truth of it? I believe, deeply and sincerely, that old Death has spared me thus far and this long for the sake of something truly terrible. That those of us who have endured so much and been left alive enough, if not entirely hale and whole, are being prepared for something worse than any of us is able to imagine.

"And what do I say to that? What can I say? What should I say?

"I say let us fill our cups and drink to this moment as if it were to be our last!"

Ghost Voice



Now you know the two chief actors of the story. Witnesses who will give testimony. And it will be, as you will see, mostly a matter of observing them and listening to them, to their thoughts and words, separately and together in consort, a duet of voices making their own music. Whispers fading in and out of the darkness.

Ghosts, no more and no less, we cannot be clearly seen by daylight. Vague and brief as frosty breath on coldest days, we float through time. No, say instead that we float upon the surface of time as you might float on a lazy stream on a soft summer afternoon. That's an image which is true enough. Except that, for ourselves, the lost and almost forgotten time of our living and being, our brief time to suffer and to rejoice, is now and always an eternal February. It can be summer again only in your memory.

You will have noticed how I have said *we*. Claiming a place for myself. For though I play no part in the events of this tale, I am nevertheless ever present, at once the teller of

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it and the principal witness to it all, first to last.

The other two must speak for themselves. Believe them as much as you care to, bearing in mind that even though there were saints living and dying then, in my time, as there may well be, no surely *must be* some true saints alive in yours, there are no saints to be found in this story. Coming from anyone less than a saint, or a truly innocent good heart (of which there are none to be mentioned here either), the truth, even if it accepts an invitation to be present, is likely to be somewhat tainted and confused. At the very least it will be twisted into strange shapes by whoever tells it.

Well now.

One of these is a common player. Need I say more? Truth is not dear to his heart. Or, if I may put it to you somewhat more precisely: truth is dear to his heart mainly because it is so much of a stranger to him. Plain truth is such a stranger that he often might not even recognize it, though it should come, transformed into a large, barking watchdog, to snarl and snap at his running heels.

Something of a clown, then. You see what I am getting at. Pray remember, though, that like every other fool and clown since old Adam, himself, crouched down with Eve amongst the leaves and hoped, thereby, to be hidden from the burning eyes of God, he sees and takes himself most seriously. At times most solemnly. His life's no comedy. His aches and pains hurt him as much, perhaps more than Hector's. His rages at Fortune's blessings of bad luck and injustice are, in their own way, the equal to those of proud Achilles. And he is like unto neither one of these. Not noble hero nor kin to any, although—and give him this much with full acknowledgment that it is much more than most of us will ever have the privilege to claim—he has played the parts of both of them and of many other great and proud men also. In his time, the best of his times, he has hushed unruly crowds to attentive silence and aroused their enthusiastic applause. He has moved fellow sufferers to shed tears. Oh, to be sure, he has failed at it also. Has earned his full share of hoots and jeers and other rude noises. He has been pelted with orange rinds and nutshells and gnawed bones. He has run, fleeing from the stage—though that stage may have been no more than a piece of yard, of green grass at the edges of a church fair or, maybe, the far end of a smoky hall in some draughty castle or crumbling mansion in the far country—has left the stage in a hurry and with tears in his eyes. Deeply wounded and ashamed. Well, tell me, how else can you learn and practice a mystery, a craft, except by the constant doing of it and sometimes doing it all wrong? If there have been plenty of bad times, there have also been moments of pure glory. Those times when he left the tiring room of inn or playhouse, surrounded by smiles and good wishes, his hand swelling from warm, firm handclasps, and himself secure in the certainty that the magical sound of applause which has just sent him on his way like a ship running with a fair wind behind her, has now at last and once and for all, as in some child's tale, transformed him from common anonymity into a very prince among our English players. Never again to be ignored or to be relegated to stand, rigid with envy, in the shabby shadows well beyond the pools of brightness wherein his luckier betters do splash and dance in all the joy and shine of this world's good fortune.

I have to be first to tell you (as you may, in worldly wisdom, already have guessed) that at just such a triumphant time, in triumphant and joyous mood, head held high, shoulders back, his best pair of shoes shining, he is almost certainly liable to step down firmly into some fresh dog s--t or the steaming droppings of a cart horse. As well as he knows and is sure of anything, he knows this will happen. It tends to take the keen edge off even his finest hours. He is most apprehensive when he is most content.

You see what I am saying. Bad luck is his constant, dear old companion. Dame Fortune may love him well enough (who can tell?), but, love or not, she has chosen him to be her faithful clown in cap and bells.

So often so unlucky in life and in love, he possesses one great strength, one kind of magic. Whether it may be foolish or not, he chooses not (not yet anyway) to allow himself to surrender to despair. In his heart of hearts he knows that this world, with himself in it and of it, is beyond all possible redemption and so is well lost. Because he knows that, he knows also that to win the world would be, then, to come into possession of nothing worth having.

In his most secret heart, he can see himself clearly, naked as God made him. And to see himself thus, a poor creature, pale and sad as a winter root, is to know beyond any doubting that he is a fool. But, don't you see?, he still loves this tired world, worthless as it has been and may be. And calling upon St. Paul and St. Augustine and any and all others he can think of, he tries hard to learn to love himself, too. Which is why he is always so busily seeking the love of others (especially the ministrations of fair women), as if he needed to confirm his own best aspirations.

Yet it is these lies, falsehoods and very present frailties, which give to his life, his sometimes desperate and always anxious life, its power and its energy. And it is from his deepest falsehoods that his finest moments as a costumed player and performer, in life as much as on the boards, are slowly and surely drawn out of deep and dark and into light. Like the sweetest and coldest well water which can assuage the most burning thirst even as it sets your teeth on edge.

The other one is not outwardly and visibly much like him at all. A creature of fire and ice, blood and thunder, he is, a rusty, much-wounded soldier home from the wars. Still in one piece to be sure. And thanks be to God for that, he'll be the first to tell you. For all his best friends have left behind chunks and pieces, the best parts of themselves, in many far and forlorn places. But he is bitterly scarred in both flesh and spirit. And he is so poor from the weight of his hard experience that he will do anything he thinks necessary to remedy this distressful condition. Which is to say he can be ruthless, completely merciless if need be, yet without pride in himself for that.

Despair is the way that he walks in. He would not admit and confess that, not under brutal duress, even to himself. He denies it. He simply allows that he is not and never will be a seriously (foolishly) hopeful man. He believes that he has lost much of his faith and, with that loss, has shed the fear of hellfire. Thinking: "How could Hell be anything more terrible, any worse than so many things I have already seen and felt?" And yet knowing, in his soldier's hard heart, that there can always be worse. More than that. It is more

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than likely that there is something worse than he has ever experienced or imagined out there waiting for him.

It is the very slight, yet somehow ineradicable fear of the fires of Hell, together with the logical certainty that if there is a Hell, then he has long since earned himself a place in it, which makes him seem to be utterly fearless, as careless as any saint amid the dirty, daily business of this fallen world. Believe me, he would as soon kill you as look at your face. Yes. And yet by the same token, he would kiss you full on the lips if the spirit moved him to do so. By which I do not mean to suggest that he is one of your open-handed, open-faced, open-hearted fellows, a bag full of the hot wind of gusty feelings and with no kind of decent rectitude about him. He is not one of those savages of the latest generation who neither hold nor allow any reins upon themselves, but, instead, run away in whatever direction their thoughtless hungers and crippled fancies lead them. Not one of those by *any means. Indeed, that crew and all others like them, men* and women alike, baffle and disgust him. He thinks of them as wild beasts. For just as the player is, in large part, a creature of the experience of his craft and vocation, so this one, also, a soldier once upon a time and perhaps too long, is shaped by and clings to the virtues and vices of his trade. Rigor is his closest friend. He long since learned to fix his face into a blank mask, ever the same in pain and pleasure, hope and fear. No one, not his proud betters nor his inferiors, not his lovers nor his victims, will be given any signs or clues as to what he may be thinking or feeling. In that one sense, then, his craft is the same as the player's, though it is turned inside out.

He and the player have that much in common. With some differences.

If it is the figure of thirst that can define the spiritual man—and does not Holy Scripture, in the Psalms and in many other places, summon up hunger and thirst as the aptest similitudes for ineffable desires of our deepest selves?, then it can be said that this soldier satisfies himself inwardly just as he has so often done outwardly. Dirty, sweaty, panting like a dog, with perhaps blood, his own or someone else's, no matter which, flecked and clotted on leather and armor, he tosses his heavy helmet aside to kneel down next to some stagnant ditch and to plunge his hands through the coating of scum and slime, up to his elbows in muddy water. Lifts his cupped palms to his lips as careful and ceremonious as if he were an anointed Roman priest and as if this were the blessed chalice with the blood of Christ Jesus he was bearing. Then he drinks it down. Tongue lapping like a dog's. Eagerly in spite of the foul stink of it. Finished, he wipes the back of his hand across beard and lips and then looks up, as if to catch your eye, and winks, and laughs out loud. Laughs as if he were daring the dirty water to work on him, to sicken and kill him if it can.

Outwardly he has a face of stone.

These two, then, and myself.

Together with some others, both greater and lesser.

Of them all, the greatest voice belongs to the poet Christopher Marlowe. Who died young and badly enough, as it was, in the view of many, bound to happen. Died too young and badly, but who wrote words of such power and shining as to outlast all but a precious few, all but the finest wordsmiths of his (our) age and many others, before and after. He will say next to nothing here, having spoken for himself, once and for always and being dead and gone even as this story begins. It is the murder of this man which becomes the cause for the beginning of this story, becomes the occasion for bringing together the player and the soldier and others, ghostly lesser voices, though some were inestimably grander in life and light than they can be here.

Marlowe, who was a scholar, a poet and playmaker, and something of a spy in his time. It is not the kind of story he would have created. Yet I do believe that he would have seen through the masks and costumes of both the player and the soldier to the bare and common human nakedness they all three shared.

As for myself.

Why, that's nothing for you to concern yourself about. I am here present as a voice only, a voice from the dark. Hoping by the power of words and words alone (though *words may sometimes cast shadows like sudden wings*) to permit you to see and to judge for yourself. Trust me as much as you dare to.

◆

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◆

Otherwise think nothing of me. For this is in no way my story. Except, perhaps, this much. To know what I profess to have known and to believe what I have believed, I must have lived out a watchful life, as awake and alert and as thoughtful as I could manage. You can say that I watched and waited, bided my time until, as Holy Scripture promises and soon enough fulfills, death arrived and surprised me like a thief in the night.

If you insist on figures of speech, then ask if I was thirsty, too. And I will answer yes. But neither for cold well water nor the dregs of any ditch. Wine was my weakness. Wine to warm my heart and my bowels and to brighten my disposition. And bright it was in the world while the wine lasted.

But that is altogether another story and has no rightful place here.

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What Alysoun Did Not Tell Hunnyman

Her beauty is weakness. Has always been. For as long as she has any memory of herself. As a child, with golden hair, with fair, smooth, completely unblemished skin and with bluebright eyes, she was at once spoiled and protected. Pleased with herself even as others took a curious pleasure simply from her appearance, her presence. Pleased with herself as her mother and father were certainly more concerned with her health and well-being (a form of constant, solicitous tenderness which she confused with love) than with the mundane welfare, the aches and pains of her brothers and sisters. Who were, as she observed and not without some wincing envy, far more free than she was, free at least to live, to suffer and rejoice, to die (as some of them did in infancy and childhood), not without arousing a measure of grief and sorrow, true, but also a grief which was not without the common sense of resignation, even, in passing of time, of cheerful acceptance. She knew that they would not resign themselves to her death so gracefully. Also knew, sensed strongly, anyway, long before she had learned any words for the sense and feeling of it, that her brothers and sisters shared some things with her father and mother, kinfolk and others of the village—which was to her the world, and all of it, then. And one of these shared things was a clarity of expectation. The best and the wisest among them were never wholly hopeless, not by any means; but they learned early in their lives to hope only for the simplest things. And learned to be well pleased, indeed content, by the slightest and the least. They were not safe from pain and disappointment, not ever. But they were not at the mercy of bright and bitter expectations, especially the demanding expectations of others.

And she might have come to share this common strength and heritage, by birthright, if she had not been, from infancy, exceptionally beautiful and, thus, at the mercy of the hopes and envy, the love and hatred of others. Others who mysteriously were empowered to invest her life with secret expectations of their own, with all the selfish hopes and fancies which they had suppressed in and for themselves, but which they now felt free to set free (like, O!, the winged and terrible creatures freed from Pandora's box) in her name. For her name's sake. They might believe her to be worthy of admiration or envy or even a form of bitter contempt. Yet they could never imagine her as she conceived herself to be—as a perfect and living sacrifice to alien beings who were like shadows of themselves. An offering up of self to strange gods and spirits who filled dreams with their murmuring voices and who riddled the darkness with frightening and invisible wings.

So you can see how to all the natural woes of childhood were added the burden of fears, at times reduced to the pure, chilled, cold-sweat terrors of awareness, as in the heart and center of an evil dream, that she was not so much blessed, being spared from so many commonplace, quotidian bruises and breakings, itches and winces, fevers and chills, these things which make up such a large part of the lives of all of us, the less lucky others, as she was being raised up like some fat goose, prize pig, spring lamb, kept and preserved for something yet to come, perhaps for some enormous and surprising agony. An agony of flesh or spirit or, most likely, of both. An agony which, whenever and wherever it might come and seize her, she surmised, would serve as a blessing for all the others, those whose indifferent lives ran gently away like water dribbling from their cupped hands.

This, then, was the playhouse of her childhood.

Earlier in the age, in the old days of the old Faith, she might very well have studied and dreamed the lives of the saints. Perhaps found her own true vocation in a nunnery. But here and now in this new/old world, all of it burning, aflame with continual and indescribable changing, she found no sanctuary except whatever imaginary edifice she could build and inhabit by the power of mind and by the strength of her indomitable, aspiring will.

Call it paradoxical, if you choose to, the purest form of irony, but nevertheless what the world took to be her greatest blessing, gift and asset, that extraordinary beauty of face and form which, no matter how much or how often threatened, has never yet failed her, she took and takes to be a weakness and a curse. And so her secret, thus her strength,

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is to be found elsewhere, at home not in the commodity of wonderful flesh, but in both mind and spirit, unsexed, being neither the common attributes of man or woman, and being also ageless. And yet so long as she is, or seems to be, both young and beautiful, she remains desperately vulnerable. Many times she has found herself longing for deformity, for a siege of any one of the much-dreaded diseases of the flesh which would, at least, set mind and spirit truly free from the tyranny of skin and bones. Times when, staring into a looking glass, she can picture herself clawing that face to bloody ribbons and raw meat. Times when, looking into a candle flame or a fire on the hearth, when she has felt a sudden need to plunge herself into it as (for so she heard long ago and now imitates) great ladies, from time to time, do place their pampered bodies into warm and scented baths. . . .

Scent was how he came to her first, an odor of flowers, of sweet distilled perfume. And she thought, first, as she followed her servant into the chamber where he was waiting for her, facing away towards the fire, that there must be a lady here to see her. Entered the chamber and saw instead a broad thick back, square, close-clipped hair, flecked with stains and spots of grey, he turning, light on the balls of his feet, like a dancer or a swordsman, at the first sound of her shoes in the room, not smiling, yet somehow affable enough, polite, a formal greeting and not without a certain warmth. Hat in hand, sword at hip, a gentleman clearly, yet clad in plain and sturdy clothes; a military gentleman, then, every inch of him, turning and taking a step or two, no more, his eyes brightening and then (it seemed) withdrawing into shaded, hooded caves of a badly scarred face.

Seeing Captain Barfoot, firelight behind him, candlelight revealing his face and figure, she surveyed, unflinching, the brute handiwork of visible scars and then looked away into his shadowed eyes, eyes which had seemed bitter cold to her when they first brightened; stared into his shadowy eyes, and she had been suddenly possessed of a vision of herself, stepping out of all her clothing then and there, shining in candlelight and firelight, swimming in those dark cold eyes and shedding her skin as well. In a moment exchanging, as it were, one body for another. Wrapping his strangely bruised and battered flesh around herself, the bones of her, like a warm old cloak or a clean wool blanket, now at last somehow truly invulnerable; because now at last she would be the owner, in a wink of time, of all of the pains and grief and woe she had been hidden from and which had been so far hidden from her. Because now at last, and all like the putting on of a cloak, just so simply, no worse pains or grief or woe could ever come to pass.

What she felt, then, was first a raw surge of desire, almost irresistible, an overwhelming need not merely to offer up herself, the best parts of herself, to him and his pleasure (whatever that might prove to be), but, much more, to offer herself, such as she was, to him so completely that she would be wholly consumed by the act of giving, itself, and would, in truth, become him, to live in the habitation of his large bones, the architecture of his hard muscles, ugly scars, looking out on a world restored and more, transformed and transfigured, through his dark cold brutal eyes.

At first she heard next to nothing of what he was saying. She looked into the shadowed sockets of his eyes and felt a tremble of weakness, as if she were about to faint. As if they had been toying and teasing with each other at love for half an hour.

Whatever it was he wanted to know, she could not have lied to him to save her own life.

As it was, he did not ask anything much of her. He stood there politely, fastidiously clean, scented with some expensive womanly perfume, and proceeded to ask her for that foolish Papist pamphlet which she had never seriously considered publishing.

He sternly warned her, in his soft, hoarse voice. Tipped her a slight bow of farewell, put on his hat and turned and walked outside to vanish into the noisy, busy street. Walked away to leave her standing there with a weak-kneed feeling close to the pangs of extreme hunger and thirst. Until, after a moment, hearing herself breathing deeply like a sleeper, coming to herself like waking, with a fury at the weakness she had allowed to invade herself, she went back to the printing shop. Where, finding them all loafing and idling the time away, she fell into a shouting rage.

Later she could not, would not tell Hunnyman much of this. And nothing at all about her deepest feelings. Lest someway or other it might serve him to free himself from the sense of need. His hunger and thirst for her. The enchanted spell of his own false and foolish hopes.

LIBERAL ARTS

ON INSPIRATION

I have often thought how interesting a magazine paper might be written by any author who would—that is to say, who could—detail, step by step, the processes by which any one of his compositions attained its ultimate point of completion. Why such a paper has never been given to the world, I am much at a loss to say—but, perhaps, the autorial vanity has had more to do with the omission than any one other cause. Most writers—poets in especial—prefer having it understood that they compose by a species of fine frenzy—an ecstatic intuition—and would positively shudder at letting the public take a peep behind the scenes, at the elaborate and vacillating crudities of thought—at the true purposes seized only at the last moment—at the innumerable glimpses of idea that arrived not at the maturity of full view—at the fully matured fancies discarded in despair as unmanageable—at the cautious selections and rejections—at the painful erasures and interpolations—in a word, at the wheels and pinions—the tackle for scene-shifting—the step-ladders and demontraps—the cock's feathers, the red paint and the black patches, which, in ninety-nine cases out of the hundred, constitute the properties of the literary *histrio*.

—*Edgar Allan Poe, "The Philosophy of Composition," 1846*

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Alien Worlds

by Fred Chappell

She was a handsome woman, Raylene Thomason, not what you'd call beautiful, but with Cherokee blood that gave her a broad pleasant face with a clean jawline and steady dark eyes. She took her looks so much for granted that it seemed she paid no attention, and maybe she didn't. Her appearance was useful for getting men interested in her, though she was not a flirt or a tease. But she was curious about men because she simply could not make them out. They were helplessly attracted, always putting moves on her—well, okay, that's how men are—but when she took up with a man and tried to make him happy, it was only a week or two before he began treating her shabbily, lying and sneaking and cheating. Now why was that?

She was taking a continuing education philosophy class Tuesday nights at Sugdon College and the demeanor of the affable fuzzy young instructor had gained her confidence, though she hardly knew him. After class one night in October she had waited patiently to speak until the other students departed and then had told him quietly: "I'm going out tomorrow night."

"Going out?" he asked.

"Yeah," she said, and her gaze turned inward and she nodded in agreement with some thought that Rodney Hegen knew he would never hear. Then she hitched her books against her chest and walked out of the classroom, marching away as steady as a soldier.

And because he was an unworldly fellow or maybe because he had come recently to east Tennessee from Albany, New York, and didn't understand local custom and idiom, he could not at first figure out what in the world Raylene was talking about. Rodney knew the ideas of wise men as they are revealed in books, but he was less acquainted with emotional impulse, and he and east Tennessee were nearly strangers to one another.

Asking among his amused colleagues, Rodney discovered that for Raylene "going out" would mean cruising the casual streets of Sugdon in her shiny black Dodge pickup truck and inspecting the parking lots of a couple of hamburger drive-ins and finally settling down for a beer but not more than two at a joint called Happy Rabbit. She was taking revenge on her boyfriend for her hurt feelings and if there was a man who struck her fancy and showed some humor and halfway decent manners, well then, she might console herself a little while in the night. Probably she wouldn't. But she might and if she did she wouldn't feel guilty about it, not in the least, because Frank had no right to treat her the way he did. Who made him the Emperor of Women anyhow?

So then the question remaining with Rodney was whether Raylene had extended an invitation. Was he supposed to go out tomorrow night in his dinky yellow Toyota and prowl up and down the avenues in hope of accidentally encounter-

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ing Raylene? It wouldn't be a statistically improbable occurrence; the population of Sugdon numbered no more than some ten thousand-odd souls.

But if he was inexpert in instinctual behavior and local folklore, Rodney had confidence in his ability to read the finer parts of human character. Raylene had vouchsafed a confidence. She had sized him up and regarded him as trustworthy and this was her seal of friendship: *Here is what is in my mind to do, Dr. Hegen.* A simple declaration and no more. It would be easy for Rodney to hear dreadful things about her boyfriend Frank but she was not going to be the one to tell. Because, you see, on his side Rodney had to trust Raylene that her night out being a naughty girl was the right thing to do, a necessary stage in the relationship with Frank. She had told her philosophy teacher what she was going to do because she was a serious person. She respected him as a man who spoke familiarly of Aristotle and Descartes and to tell him about her night of indiscretion was a way to show her respect.

But why shouldn't she take up with Rodney? Why shouldn't they enjoy a wild, brief, passionate fling? Rodney was a bachelor and rather a hapless one, to judge by the rumpled and shapeless look of his clothing and the sunless pallor of his face. He wore the usual academic sports coat and tie, right enough, but a lower button was likely to be missing from his white shirt, revealing a demure concave navel mounted in a comfortable-looking paunch. Dr. Rodney Hegen was an academic of the ancient type: worn carpet slippers and no word processor, a devoted believer in careful thinking with a mercifully short list of publications. He could not have recognized a jogging shoe.

In short, no strings. Why then did he merely file away the salient and seemingly inviting facts about the handsome Raylene without trying to act upon them with romantic, or at least with sexual, intent?

It was because he was lucky this time and thought he understood Raylene's motive in telling him her secret. As a general rule, he had no inkling of the duplicities, subterfuges, and arcane stratagems that infest a casual human relationship. It never occurred to him that someone might be shading the truth, or omitting some part of it, or flatly lying to him for reasons of personal advantage. But the seriousness with which Raylene spoke her sentence — "I'm going out tomorrow night" — gave him to know that there was nothing trivial about it, and certainly nothing coquettish. She was going out tomorrow night because she was at a desperate stage with her boyfriend and her going out was supposed to effect some change in their relationship, for better or worse.

So he was not surprised to find that after the next class on Tuesday night, she was again waiting until all the other students had departed to speak to him. She stood patiently by the blackboard as separate questions were asked about term papers and an approaching midterm exam. Then when the room was empty but for the two of them, she spoke with perfect seriousness: "I went out last Wednesday night."

"I see," he said, feeling that he did see.

"I drove by your house," she said.

"Oh?"

And once again she nodded in agreement with her private thought and marched steadily off, leaving him to think: this second time she spoke two sentences. If she stays to talk next week will she speak three?

Then he imagined her driving by the little stone bungalow he rented on Cambridge Street, her snazzy black pickup purring by, throbbing with power. She would have seen his lights on in the living room where he had sat reading or grading papers or sipping a glass of passable red wine while listening to the classical music station. He could not remember precisely what he had been doing last Wednesday evening, but all his nights were so similar that he was able to form an accurate idea. Perhaps he had called his mother. Once a week, Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday, he telephoned Albany to tell his mother that he was doing well, enjoying his classes and students, and no, he wasn't married yet, no he wasn't dating anyone special, no-no he hadn't met any women who meant anything out of the ordinary to him. But yes, there were lots of nice girls in east Tennessee, it was only that he'd been so busy with his teaching and research. Then after he had hung up he wondered what his mother would think of Raylene Thomason, and decided that she wouldn't think anything. If his mother ever met Raylene she would only gape like an awestruck Tennessee tourist visiting the Louvre.

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Mostly she didn't speak but watched him ravel the learned perplexities with a gaze so steady it was almost unnerving. Her attention never wavered.

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That one vision of the two worlds haunted him, Raylene in her dashing pickup truck off to meet some muscular beery young man in his denim jacket with the cut-off sleeves; and he, Rodney, with a half glass of red wine in one hand and an open book in the other, sitting in his soiled overstuffed chair he'd bought at Good Will and with his stocking feet propped on the cardboard box full of professional journals that served for a hassock. This vision stayed in his mind as representing with utmost clarity the two separate worlds that he and Raylene inhabited. These worlds were so close that they even touched, but they were so alien to one another that expressive communication between them seemed unlikely.

It was a situation not entirely unheard of, but he couldn't help wondering how Raylene perceived it. Did she see their relationship as the fragile touching of separate worlds? Did she see any relationship between them at all? But she had initiated the relationship, so she must recognize it in some way. Probably it was no more than it seemed; he was her respected teacher in whom she had invested a personal confidence.

He allowed himself to dwell only briefly on the larger and more intriguing question: how did Raylene ever come to be taking an introductory course in philosophy? Not that she

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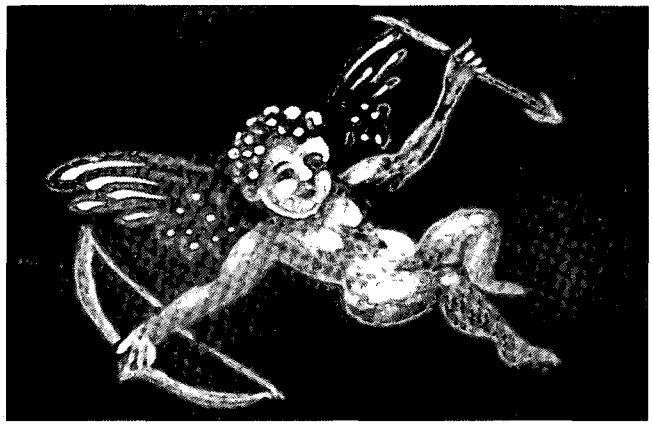
was unintelligent; the few times she had contributed to class discussion she had spoken clearly and to the point. Mostly she didn't speak but watched him ravel the learned perplexities with a gaze so steady it was almost unnerving. Her attention never wavered. She wanted to know what Plato thought, she wanted him to clarify what Plato thought, she desired to know how Dr. Hegen judged what Plato thought.

The notion struck him that Raylene wanted to know the truth about the universe. She had been misled, deceived, and flatly lied to by the men in her life, so now she needed to get the straight of it. Here was a mild vexation for Rodney; he could not claim to teach the truth but only a prudent



comparative analysis of ideas that are considered—or that were once upon a time considered—to point toward some part of the truth. I must tell her that, Rodney thought, or she'll mark me down as one more man she can't trust.

But he decided not to tell her of the modest goals of his philosophy class, fearing his explanation would make him small in her eyes. He was proud of being admired by Raylene and he wanted to stand secure in her admiration.

Today was Thursday and he began to look forward to the coming Tuesday with warm anticipation. What would she tell him this third magical time? Suppose she said to him again, as she had said two weeks ago: "I'm going out tomorrow night." This time he would have to understand it as an invitation, wouldn't he? And he would have to respond in the accepted fashion, driving all about in his car until he and Raylene accidentally tracked each other down. . . . But he could do that only if he wanted to meet her and enter into whatever such a relationship with her would be. An affair, would you call it, a romance?

He decided that if he and Raylene ever plunged into a genuine love affair something would be ruined. Lovers were a dime a dozen; the relationship that obtained between the two of them now was as rare as it was delicate, and it ought to be preserved for that reason if for no other. He did not want to decline in her estimation. At this moment he was unique, the only philosopher she'd ever known. But if they became lovers he would have to stand in competition with the hardbodied young men she knew, the wild boys who drove pickup trucks to match her own. He was certain that he couldn't stack up against the carefree Tennessee boys by their own standards.

Then—abruptly—he was angry at these nameless, faceless boys he could imagine only dimly. It wasn't fair that they every one had a chance with Raylene while he was denied all opportunity. Of course, this situation was the result of Raylene's predilection for the local hardasses in their blue jeans and rolled-sleeve T-shirts and shaggy haircuts, so he became angry at Raylene. Mostly, though, he was angry at himself for being such a wimp, sipping his dopey red wine and reading books that only wimps like himself had ever heard of, books that made no difference to the real business of the world.

It was a measure of how far Rodney Hegen was gone that he could say to himself such a phrase as "the real business of the world" without stopping to examine its implications. Another indication of his hazardous state of mind was the fact that he actually said the words, talking aloud as he walked up and down in his cluttered living room, listening to hear if Raylene's truck passed by at ten o'clock or midnight or later. On Sunday night he turned out his lights and sat by the window and waited, peering out, but she didn't drive by.

All day Monday he was restless and irritated but on Tuesday, the day of his philosophy class, he calmed down and thought soberly. Raylene was a serious person, but she was hardly a serious scholar and it was likely that she would find other more engaging interests than philosophy. She would never finish out her semester in this class; in fact, it was highly improbable that she would even attend class this evening.

But there she was in her blue jeans with the broad red patent leather belt and her blouse that looked vaguely like a cowgirl shirt. His whole being brightened the moment he saw her sitting in her accustomed seat and he plunged into his lecture with a piquant *bon mot* and for the whole class period, three hours without even a coffee break this evening, spoke with witty clarity and refined brilliance. It was a performance such as he'd never given before, such as he had not believed himself capable of.

When he finished he was drained but still exhilarated. He was a little disappointed too that none of the students stopped on the way out to congratulate him on his performance. But he was happy—and enormously relieved—to find that Raylene waited once more to speak to him.

"This lecture you gave tonight—" she began.

"Yes?" he said.

"Well, it didn't make a bit of sense."

Unhappiness was over him then like a velvet shadow. "Oh," he said. "I'm sorry to know that."

"It was like you were all confused," she said. "Like you couldn't think straight."

"I see."

"So I expect we'd better get married."

"Excuse me?"

"You and me," she said. "I think we better get married. So that you won't be so mixed up all the time."

"Do you think I'll understand things better if we get married?"

"Yes. I believe that will make everything come clear."

"All right then," he said. "I accept your proposal."

"No," she said. "That's the first thing we have to get straight. *I* didn't propose; *you* did."

"Oh . . . I see," he said, but he didn't. Not yet.

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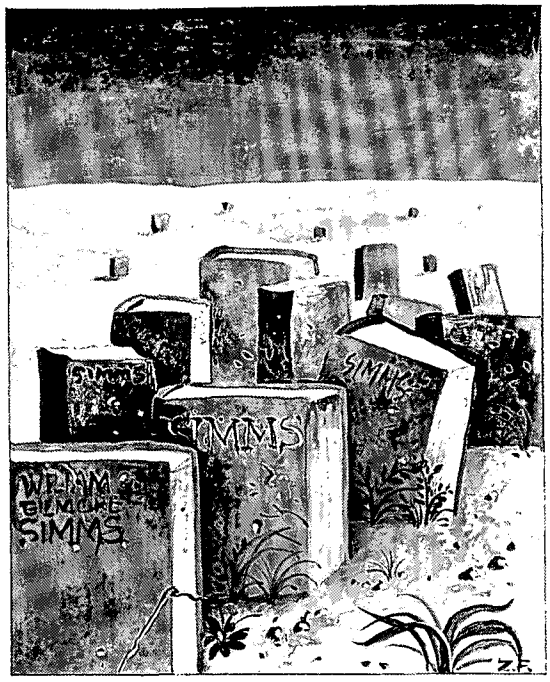

New England Against America

by Clyde Wilson

"The fiction of Mr. Simms gave indication, we repeat, of genius, and that of no common order. Had he been even a Yankee, this genius would have been rendered* immediately *manifest to his countrymen, but unhappily (perhaps) he was a Southerner. . . . His book, therefore, depended entirely upon its own intrinsic value and resources, but with these it made its way in the end."
—Edgar Allan Poe

"Long Years of Neglect": The Work and Reputation of William Gilmore Simms
edited by John Caldwell Guilds
Fayetteville and London: University of Arkansas Press; 248 pp., $20.00

◆

In the heroic effort to establish an American literature, intellect, and culture before the Civil War, the main line of tension was not between cosmopolitans and provincials, nor between classicists and romanticists. It was regional. But the primary regional dividing line was not drawn, as you may think, along the Appalachians (East vs. West), nor along the Potomac (North vs. South). Rather, it was at the Hudson River (New England vs. America).

This descriptive historical truth is now obscured by the fact that the New Englanders were successful in convincing much of posterity that they *were* American culture, a process that was assisted by their colonization of Manhattan during the antebellum period through such figures as Horace Greeley and William Cullen Bryant. Yet the lines of tension were clearly drawn and obvious to everybody at the time: on the one hand, moralistic, reformist, sentimental, pushy, genteel, devolved Puritan, transcendental New Englanders, eager to impose the supremely virtuous model of the closed communities of Massachusetts as the pattern not only for America but for all mankind; on the other hand, a more leisurely and tolerant, openhanded, rural, frontier, traditional, Anglican, gentlemanly (not genteel) spirit that visualized the true American culture as arising from the open spaces South and West of the Hudson (or in the case of Melville, the seas). New York and Philadelphia were in many cultural respects closer to the South than to Boston, at least before the 1850's.

In the literary politics that characterized the antebellum period, a host of well-organized, industrious, mutually-admiring New England scribblers pursued a totally ungenerous policy of self-aggrandizement, presenting themselves to the world as America and ignoring or slandering the rest of the country whenever it suited their purposes. After the Civil War, lacking any

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formal opposition, they had the field pretty much to themselves except for sporadic populist rumblings from the Midwest.

Anyone who will look at what passed for mainstream literary history and criticism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, for instance, will find a host of second- and third-rate New England writers (Longfellow, Lowell, Whittier, Bancroft, Motley, and many others now justly forgotten) shamelessly celebrated as the perihelion of American letters, with only an occasional slighting reference to Poe or Melville. When Hawthorne appears it is in an interpretation sanitized to please New England schoolmarms of both sexes. It is little known but true, that the present stature of Poe and Melville and understanding of Hawthorne (all of whom were outside the New England canon) rests upon the heroic efforts of a few scholars and critics in this century to correct, in part, the incredibly mean-spirited and petty Bostonian warp that was imposed on the evaluation of American literature after the Civil War.

It is also a fact that the success of the Bostonians in literary reputation was not matched by the quality of their contributions as measured in the perspective of the ages. American creative literature of the first rank was made almost entirely outside of the Boston-Cambridge ethos. Poe was a self-declared Southerner in perpetual combat all of his short career with the New England spirit; Melville a New York Democrat who could write verse in celebration of the ancient honor of Virginia in the midst of the Civil War and whose obsessed Captain Ahab was possibly (possibly) a metaphorical abolitionist. Hawthorne was a friend of Franklin Pierce, the most Southern of all Northeastern politicians, and the main thrust of his work is a subversion of the self-congratulatory millennialism of his New England brethren. (I do not count Emerson and Thoreau in the first rank. Even those who admire them must admit that they are would-be philosophers and saints, not strictly creative artists.)

After Poe, Melville, and Hawthorne, the second rank of antebellum literature (omitting some interesting one-book authors) is formed up by Cooper and Irving. Both of them achieved sufficient recognition abroad early enough that they could not be buried under Massachusetts obloquy. Both were at odds with the New England spirit. Read Cooper on the nasty lower-class Yankees (in the original precise ethnic meaning of that term) who swarmed into and defaced his ancestral region in upstate New York (*Homeward Bound* and *Home as Found*) and in opposition to abolitionists (*The American Democrat*). And recollect that one of Irving's most popular stories concerns the disgrace of an absurd canting New Englander, Ichabod Crane, who presumed too much on the good manners of the Hudson Valley Dutch.

Perhaps the most egregious remaining uncorrected legacy of bias from these old literary wars is the long-continued obscurity and misunderstanding that surrounds the Charleston romancer William Gilmore Simms (1806-1870), who just possibly, when accurately appreciated, will rank shoulder to shoulder with Cooper and Irving. He was the premier antebellum writer of the South, after Poe, and the premier interpreter of the West, after (or perhaps with) Cooper. One of the most prolific, talented, multifaceted, and wide-ranging of American authors in the 19th century, Simms was recognized everywhere before the Civil War (except in the most chauvinist Boston circles) as a major force in the creation of an American literature. Today he is almost unknown in any serious way except to a few specialists.

A measure of the neglect is that the first and last biography of Simms was published in 1892, and that a superficial and badly misconceived one. An excellent six-volume edition of his letters has been produced in South Carolina, but this has been little used by literary scholars and even less by historians, few of whom have awoke to the fact that Simms was the most articulate intellectual in the South in the late antebellum period and thus is, or ought to be, of considerable interest to general as well as literary history.

There are, it is true, some formidable obstacles to an appreciation of Simms. One of the contributors to "*Long Years of Neglect*," James E. Kibler Jr. (with an essay on Simms's poetry), has said elsewhere that Simms must have written steadily with both hands all his life. He published about 70 or so separate titles — poetry, plays, novels, short stories, history, essays — and probably an equal amount of material, often anonymous or pseudonymous, in the numerous Southern journals of which he served as editor and chief contributor. (In his spare time, Simms was a planter, a public man, and the chief literary talent scout and critic of the South.)

Not only is the volume and diversity of his work so daunting as to encourage most scholars to pass him by, but much of the vast output is hard to find. *The Cassique of Kiawah*, possibly Simms's best novel, is virtually unobtainable. *Woodcraft*, the other possible best, is a little more available, having been reprinted in South Carolina in an annotated edition along with Simms's other Revolutionary War novels during the American Revolution bicentennial. By a strange fate, Simms's best known and most available novel, *The Yemassee*, the one which most people are likely to have read if they have read anything, is far from his best.

Added to these logistical obstacles are the ideological problems. As an unapologetic and explicit defender of the regime of the Old South, Simms is a highly unsympathetic and nearly incomprehensible figure for most modern scholars. Even so, the main reason that Simms's writings are relatively unknown and undervalued is scholarly inertia — the tendency to repeat old errors generation after generation rather than do the hard work of real exploration and reassessment.

In fact, in the past half century or so, there has been a very large accumulation of specialized scholarship on Simms, in books, articles, and theses, exploring specific aspects of his *oeuvres* and life. The net result has been a gradually rising estimate of his literary standing. This considerable literature has never been formulated in a way that has had much impact on general history; however, the present volume of essays does not come out of the blue, but is an expression of a long-gathering movement. In the book are a dozen essays by both literary scholars and historians on Simms's major works and aspects of his career. It remains to be seen whether the insights and judgments presented here will be integrat-

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ed into a more general understanding.

I do not want to claim too much. Simms possessed a high order of talent, not genius. He did not write *Moby Dick* or *The Scarlet Letter*. His poetry, which he regarded highly, will not be taken too seriously today. Any author as prolific as he was is bound to suffer from unevenness. He is sometimes careless and melodramatic, not, as in the conventional Parringtonian account, because his art was undermined by a romantic and extroverted Southern society, but because a restless temperament led him ever onward to new material. However, at his best, Simms could tell an important story well, with great dramatic conviction and a serious confrontation of moral and social issues.

I do not want to put down Cooper, whom I admire and who has an essential place in American literature. Moreover, Cooper preceded and made possible Simms's literary exploitation of the materials of the American Revolution and frontier. Nevertheless, comparison with Cooper is the most telling that can be made for Simms. I would contend that in his best works Simms was a better storyteller than Cooper, a better plotter, a better psychologist. Moreover, he had a much ampler historical and social imagination as well as a vast fund of something Cooper lacked entirely—humor. Most readers have found Simms's frontiersmen and Indians superior to the more famous characters of Cooper. Moreover, Simms truly anticipated many of the great achievements of 20th-century Southern literature, whereas Cooper has no real progeny.

Most of Simms's major work, and much of the lesser, is found in the three series of novels, or "romances" as he called them, that he produced more or less simultaneously from the 1830's to the 1850's: those set in the colonial Southeast (*The Yemassee, The Lily and the Totem, The Cassique of Kiawah*, and others); those concerned with the American Revolution in South Carolina (*The Partisan, Mellichampe, The Scout, Katharine Walton, The Forayers, Eutaw, Joscelyn*, and *Woodcraft*); and the "border romances," set in the newer Southern states (*Guy Rivers, Richard Hurdis, Border Beagles, Beauchampe*, and others).

In these books Simms created an all-encompassing, Balzacian panorama, from the 16th to the 19th century, of the history and society of the region south and west of Virginia, a region that is, after all, large and authentically American, even if seldom noticed, except negatively, in Boston. In the process he explored as extensively as anyone ever has the great dramas of colonial settlement, Revolution, and the conquest of the frontier, and portrayed fully every social class—the aristocracy, lesser gentry, yeomen, poor whites, frontiersmen, slaves, Indians. At their best these books display drama, humor, robust realism, large and complex historical themes, and a sophisticated treatment of manners.

By a twist of fate even more curious than the popularity of *The Yemassee* there is a lingering impression that Simms was a prudish, stilted writer, full of wooden figures of Southern ladies and gentlemen. Though he did pay some allegiance to ideal aristocratic types, as models for a society that was emerging from the lawlessness and crudity of the frontier, the impression of artificiality is far from just. In fact, in his own time and later, Simms was usually subjected to the opposite criticism. The New Englanders thought that he was too graphic and realistic in dealing with the hard facts of sex, violence, and human drives. Later, when Victorian standards were being abandoned for "realism," he was dismissed as a mere romanticist. He was, thus, first condemned for not being genteel enough, and then for being too much so.

It is closer to the truth to say that Simms, like Faulkner and the other Southern greats, dealt with a full range of characters well, especially vividly and convincingly with the middle order of Southern society, the nonaristocratic whites, and that his most predominant characteristic and greatest virtue as a writer is a robust and often sophisticated realism. Contrary to an oft-repeated judgment also, Simms's women are as close to flesh and blood as those of any contemporary male writer, as Anne M. Blythe shows in discussing the range of female characters in her essay herein on *The Cassique of Kiawah*. The same can be said about the strong and

"Long Years of Neglect"
The Work and Reputation of William Gilmore Simms
Edited by John C. Guilds

William Gilmore Simms (1806-1870) was a poet, critic, novelist, and correspondent whose accomplishments have long been overshadowed by the events of history. These essays begin to rectify the damage done over time to Simms' reputation and offer fresh insight into William Gilmore Simms as a significant and intriguing figure in early American literature.

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shrewd widow Eveleigh in *Woodcraft*.

The essay by Blythe on *The Cassique of Kiawah* and that on *Woodcraft* by James B. Meriwether, the scholar who has been responsible for bringing a number of Simms's books back into print, are the most important perhaps of a number of good essays in this collection, focusing as they do with considerable depth and insight on Simms's two more enduring books. *Woodcraft*, as Meriwether shows, is a study, at the same time profound and humorous, of the difficult process of

restoring social order in South Carolina after the guerrilla civil warfare of the Revolution, told through the experiences of Captain Porgy, a Rabelaisian member of the lesser gentry. Any Southerner will recognize Captain Porgy as an archetypal character of high authenticity. *Woodcraft* displays Simms's historical and social perceptions at their most complex.

Another aspect of Simms's work usefully explicated in this collection is his relationship to the genre known as backwoods humor. In this connection are the essays by Linda E. McDaniel on *Paddy McGann* and Mary Ann Wimsatt on Simms's short fiction. Paddy McGann, one of Simms's late creations, was a South Carolina river boatman, candid and self-assertive in the tradition of the frontier, who by a series of fantastic adventures is transported to New York where he observes the literary society of the day and undergoes haunting experiences of the supernatural reality of evil. Among the short stories, "Sharp Snaffles: How He Got His Capital and His Wife" is surely a neglected masterpiece of 19th-century American writing. It is the story of a landless North Carolina mountaineer's struggle to establish himself as a man and a member of his community. As the essayists show, these works contain seriously conceived and crafted elements of the exuberant fantasy and humor of the American tall tale, interwoven with moral struggle and social criticism and a mature understanding of the human condition. No one who is familiar with these works can dismiss Simms as a mere shallow defender of the aristocracy.

Among the biographical essays, the more noteworthy are Miriam J. Shillingsburg on Simms's last lecture tour in the North in 1856, an eye-opening account of the literary politics that have been previously mentioned, and an analysis by David Moltke-Hansen of the development of Simms's understanding of American history. Simms's achievements in the realm of history are certainly another area of unjust neglect.

Much of Simms's fiction was profoundly historical. He also wrote history and biography, and he thought deeply and originally about the stormy relationship between historical fact and literary art, as may be seen by perusing his collected essays (1845) *Views and Reviews in American Literature: History and Fiction*. In the collection under review new ground is broken in Nicholas G. Meriwether's essay on *The Lily and the Totem*, a failed but interesting attempt by Simms to combine history and fiction in a new genre. It is perhaps not too much to say that in his theory and practice Simms anticipated some of the most creative historical writers of our own time—John Lukacs, Solzhenitsyn, George Garrett, Shelby Foote—in a testing of the frontier between fact and art and a realization of the dead end of so-called objective history.

I have made some rather sweeping assertions about the rightful place of William Gilmore Simms in American letters which the 12 essayists, or many of them, will not necessarily endorse. They are a good deal more circumspect, modest, and scholarly in putting forth his claims than I have been, though most would agree that his standing ought to be higher than it is. You are free to disagree with me, but I will not take you seriously until you have read *Woodcraft*, *The Cassique of Kiawah*, *Paddy McGann*, "Sharp Snaffles," and *Views and Reviews in American Literature*. If you have not, you do not know Simms. You do not really know 19th-century American literature.

The writers of the essays would not necessarily agree, either, with the description of 19th-century literary politics with which I introduced my discussion. Yet surely Simms's neglect, if such it is, reflects more than an accidental overlooking of one writer. It reflects a particular partisan heritage of ideological, not literary, judgments which possibly ought to be exposed and reexamined.

The title of the introductory essay by the editor of this collection, John C. Guilds, makes a statement and poses a question: "Long Years of Neglect: Atonement at Last?" The statement is undoubtedly true. The question remains to be answered, though this volume marshals a powerful and pertinent case for reparations.

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A Bright Shining Liar

by Russ Braley

"To be engaged in opposing wrong affords but a slender guarantee for being right."
—William Ewart Gladstone

A Bright Shining Lie: John Paul Vann and America in Vietnam
by Neil Sheehan
New York: Random House;
861 pp., $24.95

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A quarter century has gone by since David Halberstam, foreign correspondent for *The New York Times*, won a Pulitzer Prize that he said should have gone to his friend and mentor in Vietnam, Neil Sheehan. In 1964's spring of mourning, Halberstam shared the Pulitzer with Malcolm Browne of AP's Saigon bureau and also won most other awards. Sheehan, of UPI, won a consolation prize from the Sigma Delta Chi journalism fraternity. Halberstam went on to wealth and influence with a series of best-sellers.

Now Sheehan has caught up. His *A Bright Shining Lie: John Paul Vann and America in Vietnam* shot up the best-seller lists last winter and won the 1988 National Book Award. Sheehan says he toiled on it for 16 years.

The book received extraordinary promotion. The *Washington Post* magazine devoted a whole issue to Sheehan, extolling his lonely ordeal that produced "a masterpiece." *The New Yorker* serialized the book. Harrison E. Salisbury was cited as saying, "I have never read such a book and never expected to." (It was not all that tough. Sheehan received a steady stream of fellowships—$10,000 here, $30,000 there; at least five of them—and mounting advances from Random House until he owed the publisher $250,000. No wonder the promotion; the company had to get that money back.)

Most of the volume reports the fearless but ethically untidy life of Agency for International Development officer Vann, who received a hero's burial in Arlington Cemetery after his 1972 death in a helicopter accident in Vietnam. Sheehan reports Vann's battles and skirmishes in exhaustive detail, including 64 pages on the 1963 battle of Ap Bac, a Viet Cong victory that Sheehan had covered.

Then-Lieutenant Colonel Vann, who was stationed only 30 miles from Saigon, fed the reporters candid criticism of US military methods and became their source for negative stories on the war's progress. Sheehan considers him "the one authentic (American) hero of this shameful period." But Vann "lied to Halberstam and deceived him." The reporters had worried about damaging Vann's career, but "all the time he was deceiving us he knew he had no career to ruin." Vann had barely escaped court-martial for statutory rape by learning to trick the lie detector. Sheehan deplores Vann's prodigious woman-chasing (which he did sometimes in the company of Daniel Ellsberg), but worse

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was Vann's continuing insistence that the war could be won, which Sheehan attributed to his "ignorance" of Vietnam's history. Worst of all, Vann liked Richard Nixon.

Mixed into the story of John Paul Vann is Sheehan's version of the events of 1962 and 1963, and this part is disappointing, even dismaying. In November 1963 South Vietnam's President Ngo Dinh Diem and his brother Nhu were murdered in an American-backed coup. The United States denied direct complicity. Some Washington reporters, including Marguerite Higgins, were digging into the story when three weeks later President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas. Shock and grief aborted any press investigation of the martyred President, and Diem's fate was downplayed or even hailed as justice.

The reporting by the small American press corps in Saigon in 1962-1963, because it was lavishly rewarded, set the tone for adversary reporting through the next ten years of war, and still affects American journalism. The controversy continues as to whether the reporters caused Diem's death and thereby doomed South Vietnam, since no equally qualified successor was found.

Long ago the Saigon group's version of events became the media's received wisdom. As the Saigon reporters had warned it must, the United States lost Vietnam. Their accounts—their defense—have been promoted by the establishment and by Halberstam's best-sellers, Stanley Karnow's PBS television history of the war, and Walter Cronkite's television series. Sheehan, calling those who question his judgment ignorant or criminal, does not help their cause.

Sheehan doesn't fret over contradictions. On the one hand, he reports that he was not picking on Diem or exaggerating doom stories—stories that became "obvious" when well-known reporters arrived and agreed with his conclusions. On the other hand, "We did not realize that our dispatches had been arming Averell Harriman and Roger Hilsman in their attempt to persuade Kennedy to authorize the overthrow of Diem and his family." Sheehan and his fellows did not know that they were being taken seriously.

For Sheehan, nothing has changed since 1963. The deaths of one-quarter of all Cambodians, give or take a million; the hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese boat people who died in the China Sea; the decade of revolutionary polarization in the United States that followed Diem's death, do not enter into his account. His heroes remain Halberstam, Vann (with reservations), Henry Cabot Lodge Jr., Daniel Ellsberg, Roger Hilsman, and George W. Ball. His numerous villains and dupes include Ambassador Frederick (Fritz) Nolting, General Paul Harkins, Admiral Harry Felt, General William Westmoreland, sometimes Marine General Victor Krulak, Marguerite Higgins, and all of the Ngo Dinh family, but especially President Diem.

Sheehan detests the dead Diem. When Lodge arrived as ambassador, Sheehan told him that the Ngo Dinhs were so mad and so hated that they were incapable of governing. After Lodge assigned the CIA's Lucien Conein to work with coup generals, and Diem and Nhu were killed, Sheehan reports the ambassador did not regret it. Lodge told Halberstam, "What could we have done with them if they had lived? Every Colonel Blimp in the world would have made use of them."

Lodge was able to go ahead with the coup only if Diem's American defenders were sidetracked. He cut General Harkins out of cable traffic and maneuvered to get rid of CIA station chief Richardson. Halberstam identified John Richardson in a *Times* dispatch, saying that Lodge wanted him out, and President Kennedy recalled him. Richardson is not mentioned in *Lie*.

I located Richardson in 1979. He told me he liked Sheehan personally, but he believed that he and Halberstam were "young, crusading reporters who were out to get Nhu, and quite possibly Diem and his government. I remember a cocktail party conversation once with Sheehan. I told him that we had carefully and continually canvassed alternative leadership possibilities and had found none. Did he want us to take a flying leap in the dark in the midst of a guerrilla war? His answer was, 'Yes.'"

To Sheehan, Diem's popularity was contrived by General Edward Lansdale, a legendary CIA operative, and therefore fraudulent. According to Sheehan, Diem was "willfully ignorant" of his country's social conditions, "almost as ignorant as Lansdale was." Diem "did not care" if civilians died. Sheehan writes that Diem condoned

LIBERAL ARTS

YOUR TAX DOLLARS AT WORK

Commerce and Defense department investigators, who monitor American contracts with the Soviet Union to prevent illegal transfers of high technology to the Russian military, phoned Robert Trent Jones, golf course architect, to determine whether a "bunker gap" existed between Washington and Moscow.

"It was unbelievable," explains Jones, his eyes rolling. "They were actually frightened that I'd given the Russians too much information on how to build greens, bunkers, and sand traps. They kept asking about the 'military topical significance' of a golf bunker. I didn't know what the hell they were talking about, but they said the threat was real."

—from "Tee Time for Ivan" by A. Craig Copetas, in the February 1989 issue of Regardie's

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rape and torture of arrested Communist suspects, whereas the Communist General Vo Nguyen Giap, described as a man of candor and character, apologized publicly for torture excesses during the North's land-reform campaign. The Vietcong were "forbidden to execute the accused savagely," and "dispensed terror with relative discrimination." Sheehan held Diem responsible for corruption and for the cowardice and incompetence of the South Vietnamese army, ARVN, because he intimidated officers like the "bootlicking" Colonel Huynh Van Cao.

Halberstam, in his 1965 book *The Making of a Quagmire* (Random House), credited Sheehan with the best information on the Buddhist crisis of 1963, including the pagoda raids that turned US opinion against Diem. The pagoda raids put Vietnam on the front burner in Washington and triggered the coup decision, so it is disturbing that Sheehan's account of the main pagoda raid differs from Halberstam's account in *Quagmire*. Halberstam said he saw little, as he was held back by police, but he endorsed Sheehan's graphic description of military brutality, since Sheehan watched from a building next to the Xa Loi Pagoda. In *Lie* Sheehan reports that he and Halberstam watched the raid up close from a Renault taxi. I asked Sheehan about this, and he said he did stop in the building to telephone and saw some action from the sixth floor. Unfortunately, the way he has described the scene in *Lie*, readers will assume that he and Halberstam both saw brutality. Halberstam reported that the true death toll might never be known, implying that it was great. Sheehan reports, too vaguely after 16 years of research, that seven monks "apparently were killed and their bodies burned secretly."

The raid reports caused an international furor, and the United Nations sent a commission to investigate. It reported no deaths. The CIA's Richardson told me he did not believe there were deaths or even serious injuries. Marguerite Higgins, in her 1965 book *Our Vietnam Nightmare* (Harper & Row), wrote that she searched out witnesses in Vietnam and could find no evidence of anyone missing. Raised in the Orient, she had known Vietnam since childhood.

Sheehan reports that Higgins, a Pulitzer winner for her reporting in Korea, was "sent to Vietnam at the Pentagon's request," an echo of the Saigon group's charge that she was an apologist for the American military. She is not alive to refute his charge, having died of a liver fluke contracted in Vietnam's provinces. Her *Nightmare*, which first nailed down Washington's role in the coup, is the best of the Vietnam books. It never was reviewed by the *Times*, and Sheehan does not include it in his lengthy bibliography.

Sheehan initially had problems at *The New York Times*. His first book, attacking a former Navy officer who had lost his Vietnam command, was not a success. The officer sued for libel. Sheehan finally won dismissal of the suit, but the *Times* editors were discomfited. In 1968 Sheehan, by then at the *Times* Washington bureau, shared with Hedrick Smith a bombshell scoop that contributed to President Johnson's decision not to run for reelection. The report, leaked by Daniel Ellsberg to Senator Robert Kennedy and from the Senator's staff to the reporters, cited a Westmoreland proposal to send 206,000 more men to Vietnam.

In 1971 Sheehan got a unique opportunity. He was given the entire *Times* Sunday *Book Review* to summarize 33 antiwar books from such leftist authors as Mark Lane, Seymour Hersh, Noam Chomsky, and David Dellinger. His thesis was, "Should We Have War Crimes Trials?" The *Book Review* editor, John Leonard, had been a Berkeley antiwar activist, and he sent out 100 advance copies to columnists and television commentators. Sheehan's long polemic attracted the attention of Marcus Raskin and Richard Barnet of the Institute for Policy Studies, hub of the antiwar movement. They already had received the stolen Pentagon Papers from Daniel Ellsberg, and they advised Ellsberg to offer the 43-volume secret archive to Sheehan.

Sheehan was the driving force behind the *Times'* publication of its house-written version of the Pentagon Papers, which made US agencies look duplicitous and the war unwinnable. In the first installment Sheehan accused Lyndon Johnson — as the actual documents did not — of plotting to exploit the attack on US destroyers in the Tonkin Gulf to widen the war.

But all of this pales next to Sheehan's greatest flaw in *Lie* — his inability or unwillingness to address the question of Pham Xuan An. Halberstam, in *Quagmire*, wrote that "Sheehan, Perry, Turner, Rao, An and myself had created a small but first-class intelligence network." He did not give a full name for An, but said he had "the best military contacts in the country."

In 1985, former National Liberation Front Justice Minister Truong Nhu Tang identified An as North Vietnamese intelligence Colonel Pham Xuan An, who "manipulated important American journalists for years." Tang told Al Santoli, for his book *To Bear Any Burden* (E.P. Dutton), that after the war, An became a high-ranking intelligence officer in Hanoi.

Sheehan includes Pham Xuan An's name in the list of 485 persons he interviewed for his book but does not mention him in the text. I asked Sheehan if the man in his and Halberstam's intelligence network was Pham Xuan An. Sheehan confirmed that it was. An had been named as a Communist intelligence agent who manipulated American reporters for years, I said.

"Oh, I would doubt that," Sheehan said. "He didn't manipulate us. I don't think he manipulated anybody. Any agent who would try that would risk his credibility."

Sheehan said that An in 1963 was the chief Vietnamese correspondent for Reuter, and he later ended up chief Vietnamese correspondent for *Time*. When the magazine evacuated its staff as Saigon fell in 1975, An chose to stay behind. Sheehan said that does not prove he had been an intelligence agent.

"I regard him as a friend," Sheehan said. "I hope to go to Vietnam, and I hope to see him there."

One of Sheehan's dupes, Ambassador Nolting, friend and protector of Diem, published a 160-page memoir last winter, too: *From Trust to Tragedy* (Praeger). It defends Diem, and it condemns Harriman, Hilsman, and Washington's practice of deserting allies. It did not spur the media claque to rave reviews as Sheehan's book did, and unfortunately fewer people will read it. ◁

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Going Beyond Tink and Tank

by Paul Ramsey

New and Selected Poems, 1942-1987
by Charles Edward Eaton
New York, London, Toronto: Cornwall Books; 318 pp., $28.50

◆

Charles Edward Eaton, in *New and Selected Poems*, as elsewhere, is a remarkable poet, a fine metrist and stylist, and a close disciple of Wallace Stevens in artistic skill and finesse as well as in theory and topics. Many a poet who buys whole hog and pen Stevens' often-prevalent view of poetics (and thus poetry) as endless vacillation and uncertainty, utterly lacks Stevens' polish and pleasure and talent. Eaton beautifully has them, yet also makes them his own. He is the strong disciple, not the weak.

One can even say (I do say) that Eaton writes more satisfactory *poems* than the later Stevens. Stevens in *Harmonium* and sometimes elsewhere wrote some magnificent things, but most of his later work is one sprawling notebook of genius, perpetually defeating its gains and humming its losses in many a modernist key.

Eaton regularly writes poems, whole and unified poems, with skill and grace and frequent power. The theme and topic is the relationship between aesthetics, art (poetry and painting most of all, but even ordinary conversation and observation), and reality. The conclusion is that aesthetic attempts do not suffice in their purity, and that the gap between art and reality is really not to be closed.

One can complain of the prevalence of such skepticism in our time. Descartes' dream (of achievable certainty in human thought) has been replaced in much 20th-century assertion with an absolute certain *uncertainty* in all we think, were it possible for any thought to be thought or spoken. To paraphrase Heidegger: since philosophy is wholly uncertain, then poetry and metaphor become of importance, since they are no more wholly uncertain than philosophy. But how likely then is it that a given metaphor or poetic striving is true? Having confidence in what is wholly uncertain is hardly rational, much less heartening.

In a witty poem by Wallace Stevens, "A High-Toned Old Christian Woman," we are told that the "supreme fiction" of poetry, its "bawdiness . . . indulged," is just as likely to reach Heaven as are Christian projections from moral law. Both, Stevens argues, are equally projections, and therefore equally unverifiable. The word "equally" is his, the bawdiness is "equally [with the Christian morality] converted into palms," into heavenly vision. Equally? An exact tie? 50-50?A five-tenths probability? What a magnificent certainty of epistemology it would take to arrive at that! The poem ends:

> Such tink and tank and
> tunk a-tunk-tunk,
> May, merely may, madame,
> whip from themselves
> A jovial hullaboo among
> the spheres.
> This will make widows wince.
> But fictive things
> Wince as they will. Wink most
> when widows wince.

That is high good fun, but it should make logicians wince, then have the last laugh. Everything in the poem is mocked and self-mocked, an epistemological insurance policy that pays few dividends. The comedy becomes tragedy swiftly enough. It did recurrently for Stevens, whose hunger for truth—however despairing he was at times about achieving it—could not finally be placated by jokes. Poetry and truth are serious matters, in deep senses.

But, having said that, there is something to his doctrine—to know the true is not easy, and Eaton, much more than most poets who adopt such a doctrine, does not let the uncertainty undo his poetic skill, nor does he always succumb to the limitations of such belief.

His techniques and structures vary. He is one of the most skilled metrists we have, and his best qualities can be seen in "Sentimental Education," whose long lines—quiet and constrained—stand in ironic contrast to the poem's passionate lovers and vivid colorations. The title, a playful allusion to Flaubert's *L'Education Sentimentale*, is at once literal (the poem is about education, the training up, and intensifying, of the sentiments, the passions) and pejorative (applying the notion of sentimentality self-mockingly).

The poem tells the story of telling the story of a man and woman going in a canoe across blue water perhaps to an island, where they perhaps picnic and perhaps make (perhaps?) passionate love even though "somewhat wistfully" they would, perhaps, rather be reading quietly in a quiet room. The narrator then tells how that story, from childhood's mud-plushings—rich sensuous involvements in the world—on, has haunted and affected the narrator's art. He has (he tells us) retold the story many times and ways, ending with an excellent line: "Letting the keel of the green canoe cut the pages, white, so white, then blue." The line is lyric, graceful, nostalgic, gently self-mocking of poet and process, and suavely blending the actuality and the telling. The green canoe cuts through pages, whose whiteness becomes the blueness of the lake. How can we tell the telling from the tale, the language from the thing said? Well, the question can be asked and insisted on many a time and way, which come to one reasserted uncertainty, one certain uncertainty: the truth is not to be had.

Eaton *builds* poems, a welcome relief nowadays. In "Portrait of a Man Rising in His Profession," the title's jollity turns out twice true: a diver in a wet suit is speaking, underwater; the poet and the images rise toward and in the ending of the poem. The blank

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verse, unrhymed iambic pentameter, is as fine as any modern blank verse I know, its variations speaking their changes with a greater precision and feeling because of the strictness.

"Suit of Light" is a simple narrative, elaborately performed and achieved. A man stands looking at a white carpet in the sunlight through the windows and sees colors, including reds, in it—and he imagines a savage on the floor, bleeding, bleeding, just for him. The long lines are handled as skillfully as in "Sentimental Education." The poem has passion and color and playfulness. "But time rustles the silk curtains—there he stands, in the tenor of your life, opening another vein."

"Steps Taken in a Debris of Day Lilies" (in *The Thing King*, not in *New and Selected Poems*) is based on a simple procedure, intricately developed: day lilies are described, then a woman is described, and woman and lily meet in a simile that invokes a network of connectings and identities.

> Like a turned down lily,
> ready to drop,
> The woman drops her
> pollinated jewels,
> Reads a story about the sun's
> far death:
> If someone is trying to
> frighten her,
> She will turn out the light,
> lift up the lamp.
> It is still warm by the river—
> You can
> Hear the lilies feeding on
> the starlight.

The jewels are literally pollinated from being near the lilies. Jewels breed jewels metaphorically as beauty and need breed beauty and need and art. The intricate art pauses against the far and real presence-to-be in time and space and seeming inevitability of "the sun's far death"; and if the woman lifts up the lamp (of art and invention) against the light and the darkness to come, the light and dark are still present. The typical theme in Eaton—the gap between art and our artifacts and any reality—is soundly defeated for once, and we are glad. Great art does speak truth.

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Celestial Sights

by Jocelyn Tomkin

Science and Objectivity: Episodes in the History of Astronomy
by Norriss S. Hetherington
Ames: Iowa State University Press; 180 pp., $24.95

It is a November evening in 1572. The Danish nobleman and astronomer Tycho Brahe is returning to his uncle's house. As he notes that the clearer sky bodes well for resuming his observations after dinner, a strange, brilliant star suddenly catches his attention. In amazement, he watches it for some time, then:

> When I had satisfied myself that no star of that kind had ever shone forth before, I was led into such perplexity by the unbelievability of the thing that I began to doubt the faith of my own eyes, and so, turning to the servants who were accompanying me, I asked them whether they too could see a certain extremely bright star when I pointed out the place directly overhead. They immediately replied with one voice that they saw it completely and that it was extremely bright. But despite their affirmation, still being doubtful on account of the novelty of the thing, I enquired of some country people who by chance were travelling past in carriages whether they could see a certain star in the height. Indeed these people shouted out that they saw that huge star, which had never been noticed so high up.

Tycho Brahe's vivid account of his response on first seeing the supernova of 1572 leaves no doubt that it impressed him. Of course Tycho Brahe had no idea he was seeing a star blowing itself to bits; it is only in the last 50 years that astronomers have recognized supernovae as a distinct class of astronomical beast and figured out what lies behind the spectacle.

Tycho Brahe's supernova jolted European astronomy, then at a critical stage. The bolder spirits were considering the heliocentric system of Copernicus (1473-1543) as a possible alternative to the geocentric system of Aristotle (384-322 B.C.), which had been the Middle Ages' system of choice and was still the generally-accepted scheme. The supernova certainly was not on Aristotle's program, which held that the eighth sphere—the abode of the fixed stars—was immutable, nor did Copernicus say anything about stars popping seemingly out of nowhere. Hence Tycho Brahe's amazement.

In a modest 180 pages, *Science and Objectivity* describes similar astronomical incidents of shattered expectations and broken prejudices. But, unlike Tycho Brahe and his supernova, in these cases the astronomers had no trouble seeing what was there. On the contrary, the mental baggage they brought with them to the telescope caused them to "see" more than what was actually there, and, sometimes, they continued to "see" again and again what was only in their imagination. The astronomical misadventures chronicled range from 1609 to the 1920's. They concern what various astronomers thought they saw or, in the more recent instances, thought they measured.

One of the most interesting episodes involved Percival Lowell and the planet Mars. After graduating from Harvard in 1876, doing the grand tour of Europe, and then making some successful business investments, Lowell had the leisure to write books and indulge his keen interest in astronomy. He became particularly interested in Mars and its possibilities as an abode of an alien civilization. An Italian astronomer claimed to have observed dark straight markings on the Martian surface which he called "canali." Translated into English as "canals," in the English-speaking world the term had gained unintended overtones of artificial rather than natural origin. With the help of his excellent eyesight and an observatory he had built at a favorable high-altitude location in northern Arizona, Lowell took a close look at Mars. Sure enough, he saw canals; not just one or two, but a whole system of them radiating outwards from points. He concluded that Mars was inhabited and that the points were oases replenished by a planet-wide system of canals. Publication of his claim in *The Atlantic Monthly* and the eloquence

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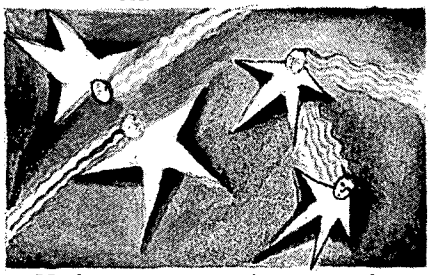
of his pen led to a widespread late-Victorian belief in an advanced, and perhaps dying, Martian civilization.

Most other astronomers saw no sign of the canals. Lowell's observations were attributed to his expectations and a psychological tendency of the mind to connect real points with imaginary lines when the eye is working at the limit of its resolution.

Because professional astronomers did not accept Lowell as a colleague, their public criticism of him was sometimes scathing. But, as Hetherington shows, professional astronomer status was no guarantee against illusion. A professional astronomer, Adriaan van Maanen, was at the center of an extended saga that ran through the 1910's and 1920's. Soon after he had measured rotation in the so-called spiral nebulae, it became apparent that these objects must be giant spiral galaxies quite separate from, and well beyond, our own galaxy. The new perspective transformed van Maanen's measurements; initially unremarkable, they became controversial. (The spiral galaxies do indeed rotate, but so slowly — the rotation periods are hundreds of millions of years — as to be completely imperceptible to van Maanen.) Those who thought the spiral nebulae were part of our own galaxy pointed to van Maanen's results. Those who thought they were separate systems suspected that whatever it was that van Maanen was measuring it could not be real, yet professional courtesy forbade them from saying so in print. As further evidence from other quarters accumulated, van Maanen's position became untenable, but he did not back down. Eventually his claims slipped quietly into oblivion.



Hetherington puts these episodes in a larger context, maintaining that "science, the search for objectivity, has become the religion of the twentieth century." No doubt about this; insofar as the West's intellectual and cultural elites have a religion, it is indeed science, although, paradoxically, they tend to be scientifically illiterate; the word "algebra" makes them nervous and the word "calculus" makes their minds go blank. The scientist has a strong positive stereotype. He is Mr. Straight — careful, modest, shy of publicity, naively idealistic, and above all, objective. With his episodes from astronomical history as ammunition, Hetherington blows the stereotype to smithereens. Scientists are human beings, and as such they are no more, and no less, objective than auto workers.

Although the scientific stereotype is bogus, some scientists find it very useful for political purposes. The main article in the February 7, 1988 issue of *Parade* magazine — a section in many Sunday newspapers — featured astronomer and popularizer of science Carl Sagan on the danger of worldwide nuclear war. A preamble, which promised that readers "may find some of Carl Sagan's insights uncomfortable and even provocative," invited the supposition that his powerful scientific intellect and objectivity granted him insights denied to ordinary people. He divulged insights such as: "The nuclear arms race, jointly pioneered by the United States and the Soviet Union. . . ." or "we [the US and the USSR] share a stated belief in the right of the people to rule themselves. Our systems of government were born in historic revolution against injustice, despotism, incompetence and superstition." After an examination of the record, he was unable to find any significant difference between American democracy and Soviet totalitarianism. In short, he offered moral equivalence, "scientifically" packaged and finished with a pretty, "objective" bow.

Evidently, destruction of the "objective scientist" stereotype is an urgent matter. But this book will not change things much. Inadequate explanations of some of the episodes' contexts will leave most readers who are not astronomers in the dark as to what is going on, and long stretches of passive, awkward, scientific journal English will put them to sleep. Unfortunately, it will take much more than this to rip off Professor Sagan's mask of objectivity.

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The Tyranny of Loss

by Katherine Dalton

Meatless Days
by Sara Suleri
Chicago: University of Chicago Press; 186 pp., $17.95

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The title of Sara Suleri's memoir, "meatless days," refers to the Pakistani government's attempt at conservation following its independence from India in 1947. Tuesdays and Wednesdays were decreed "meatless," meaning no meat would be sold and supposedly none eaten. What it actually meant, recalls Ms. Suleri, was that butchers only worked that much harder on Mondays, since the families that could afford meat could also afford refrigeration. What should have been days of abstinence turned into feasts. Even what she remembers of Ramadan is not the fasts, but the breakfasts. In this elegy of her life and her family, this is the underlying theme: the "abundance of famine," in Paul Ramsey's phrase, or, more precisely, what she has gained by loss.

Meatless Days is an extremely personal book, especially to a former student who knows her just well enough to think that some of what Suleri writes about I have no right to know. There is no nakedness like the nakedness of grief, and Suleri is grieving: for her dead Welsh mother, run over by a rickshaw in Lahore; for her murdered sister, knocked down by a car for no reason the police could ever discover; for her Pakistani journalist father, who could not forgive his five children for growing up and growing away, and who finally adopted a new child to take their place.

Meatless Days is well-written, and moving; all the more so because there is a certain heartlessness to the Yale School of criticism, to peeling away meaning for underlying meaning, and it is that much more painful to watch when a writer turns her method on herself. At least Marsyas was flayed by somebody else. "Let us wash the word of murder from her limbs, we said, let us transcribe her into some more seemly idiom. And so with painful labor we placed Ifat's body in a different discourse, words as private and

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precise as water when water wishes to perform both in and out of light. Let it lie hidden in my eye, I thought, her tiny spirit, buoyant in the excessive salt of that dead sea . . ."

It is Suleri's contention that "there are no women in the Third World," and my assumption that this is one reason why she has written this book; I also assume that this is the reason why she is here in the States, teaching English at Yale, a world apart from Pakistan. But while "ugly, gray" New Haven, so far from where she grew up, is no refuge for Sara Suleri, part of her dilemma is that while she is free to go back, she has chosen to live in exile. What she has gained from so much loss—some of it unstoppable, to be sure, but the rest jettisoned—I am not sure I yet understand. This book, I suppose. But I can see why the ancients equated exile with death, and I think Jonah was never so much at peace as when he was powerless, choiceless, in the belly of the whale.

Katherine Dalton is managing editor of Chronicles.

One Hell For Another

by Thomas McGonigle

Seven Thousand Days in Siberia
by Karlo Štajner
New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $30.00

◆

Karlo Štajner spent seven thousand days in Siberia and learned nothing. Of course the reader is moved by the awfulness of spending all that time in the Gulag, but still he is left only with the experience of a man who survived. Yet, for better or for worse, for many of the named victims, Štajner's book is the only memorial.

When Štajner singles out a General Brödis, the crime becomes vivid: "After breakfast, I saw General Brödis putting his possessions into a bundle. He took off his slippers (which I had always envied, since it was hard to walk around the cell wearing shoes all the time), placed them on top of the bundle, and then handed me everything, saying: 'You have been a friend to me. Please keep this as a souvenir; I won't need it anymore.'"

Such honesty makes Štajner's book difficult to ignore on a purely human level. And the constant emphasis on sleeping, eating, and excreting under the most horrendous circumstances of months upon months of 30 and 40 below zero reinforces our understanding of what actually did happen. (Unfortunately, the closer you get to the actual truth of the Gulag, the more difficult it is to live with the happy-go-lucky Soviet-American relations.)

Karlo Štajner is an Austrian who worked many years for the Yugoslav Communist Party. A dedicated activist, he arrived in Moscow on September 14, 1932, to work for the Comintern. In due course he was arrested and framed for being a Gestapo agent. Sentenced to ten years in Siberia, he was "tried" again at the end of his first hitch and given an additional ten years for "anti-Soviet behavior."

Štajner served out both sentences and would probably have died in Siberia had not Tito asked Khrushchev for an accounting of 113 Yugoslav Communist Party members sent to Siberia by Stalin. Two days after Tito's query, Khrushchev replied, "Exactly one hundred are no longer of this world."

Štajner's book was published in Yugoslavia in Serbian, because it served to lay out the differences between Tito and Stalin, between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union. In a way, it also served to hide the existence of concentration camps in Yugoslavia, where opponents of Tito, branded as agents of Stalin, were imprisoned. One such camp at the Naked Island (Goli Otok) was detailed in Venko Markovski's memoir, *Goli Otok, The Island of Death*, published in Bulgaria, where it served to emphasize the differences between the Bulgarians and the Yugoslavs and to obscure the camps in Bulgaria, and so on . . .)

The reader has no recourse but to go to Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago* for the actual truth of the camps. They were not created by accident, despite anything that Štajner (who remains a Communist to this day) might think. The camps were set up by Lenin himself as early as December 1917—two months after the October coup. Perhaps Štajner needed the fiction of blaming Stalin for the camps as a way to keep his faith in Communism. Sadly, the reader is left just with horror.

Politics, as Štajner's book makes it very clear, do matter and do have consequences, and it is good to read accounts like Štajner's, flawed though they may be, to remind us that when only politics remain and when everything becomes political, camps become necessary.

There are, however, other books, like *What a Beautiful Sunday* by Jorge Semprun, a former member of the Central Committee of the Spanish Communist Party (author of the screenplays for films like Z and *La Guerre est finie*). As a young man, Semprun survived Buchenwald, survived writing a falsified record of his experiences in the camp, survived being expelled from the party, survived with the illusion that there were distinctions between the Nazi and the Communist camps—survived until an April 11, 1975, appearance of Solzhenitsyn on French television convinced him that he was one of the good left-wingers who condemn the camps while approving of everything that set them up in the first place.

What A Beautiful Sunday, a memoir of Semprun's encounter with Solzhenitsyn, unlike Štajner's *Seven Thousand Days in Siberia*, is the right book for gaining an understanding of how this century has come to be dominated by the image of the Camp, and why we are all likely to see many more of them, all set up in the best interests of the people.

Thomas McGonigle is a novelist living in New York City.

Catching the Wry

by David Kaufman

In Search of J.D. Salinger
by Ian Hamilton
New York: Random House.

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According to Leon Edel, the art of biography is a "noble" endeavor. But in our celebrity-crazed era, when prurient interests have supplanted respect for artistic accomplishment, the most popular biographies are those emphasizing lurid details. Joan Peyser's

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Very Old

by Tom Murray

To us it might seem that life
For him growing older, grew harder:
Endlessly attending an invalid wife,
House-cleaning, replenishing the larder.

Tuesday and Friday are his outside days.
Shopping bag in hand he stands
At windows. You can see the reflected gaze
Of blue eyes measuring blends,

Prices and quantities. The years
Have etched the face, drawn too fine the skin
For the mobility of hopes and fears;
He keeps revelation within,

Knowing now that, having paid full toll,
He has outlived his years; each fraction
Of his chronology has become one whole,
Each second an entity, no longer one section

Leading to another. All that's past
Is turned to stone. Nothing now to narrate;
The long experiment has reached its last,
The test-tube's layered contents set and separate.

Memory no more can hurt. The wedded
Bed is history. The mongol child
That died is forever embedded
In a glacier's depth. What's gone is filed,

Sealed and shut, no fingered door giving
Emotion an inch of access. No breath
Of air stirs the grassy, rutted past. By mere living
He has absorbed the long liberation of death.

psychosexual exploration of Leonard Bernstein anticipated Arianna Stassinopoulous Huffington's even nastier and more controversial reproachment of Picasso. With a passionate impudence, the 80's are displaying an unhealthy interest in demythologizing yesterday's heroes. And within this hostile environment, where it pays to snoop for the ultimate putdown, Ian Hamilton's "search" for J.D. Salinger seems that much more inexcusable, since it sets out to expose the life of a writer who devoted considerable energy to securing his privacy. The only thing tasteful about Hamilton's *In Search of J.D. Salinger* is the subdued design of its dust jacket.

In all fairness to Hamilton, many of us share his fascination for Salinger. The rare photograph, for example, taken from behind as he walks up the hill from his mailbox or returns to his house proper from his studio cottage, has prompted a million words on the state of his health and the circumstances of his life. If Confucius had given as much thought to Salinger as Salinger has evidently given to Eastern mysticism, the oriental philosopher might have concluded that "he who wants to be the center of attention should remove himself from the picture altogether."

At one point, Hamilton goes so far as to suggest Salinger's reason for closeting himself in the first place may have been, ironically, a ploy for attention. At another, Hamilton assumes, naturally enough, that Salinger went into hiding because he had something to hide. But beyond suggesting that this "something" relates to Salinger's serving as a "spy" during the Second World War, and "that somewhere in his spying past there is a secret so secret that he now has no choice but to dwell perpetually in shadows, in daily fear, no doubt, of some terrible exposure," Hamilton doesn't even hazard a guess as to what that "secret" might be.

Hamilton has written a highly-regarded biography of Robert Lowell and has a scholarly background that would suggest he would rise above any ludicrous desire to "dish" his subject. Hamilton insists that his mission to capture Salinger's life was originally founded on good faith. When he embarked on the biography in 1982, armed with a $100,000 advance from

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Random House, he was bringing with him a lifelong admiration for *The Catcher in the Rye*. But six years, two court cases, and three versions later, the biography Hamilton ended up with is a far cry from an appreciation. By the time it was over, Hamilton was itching to pounce on Salinger, and only too eager to denigrate even Salinger's fiction, which he used to admire so much.

The single most interesting question regarding Salinger is, what have his literary efforts consisted of ever since he went into hiding? After two decades the closest thing to an answer has been provided not by Hamilton, but by the defense attorney who compelled Salinger under oath to reply, "Could I tell you or would I tell you? . . . Just a work of fiction. That's all. That's the only description I can really give it. . . . It's almost impossible to define. I work with characters, and as they develop, I just go on from there."

The book was originally scheduled to be published by Random House in August 1986, but Hamilton was coerced by Salinger's objections to modify his first version, which incorporated 200 letters written by Salinger between 1939 and 1961. After removing the offending letters from the text but retaining their content, Hamilton lost a federal appeals case in January 1987, and was forbidden to publish his altered version on the grounds that even paraphrased, the material in the letters belongs to Salinger. As others have noted, it was ironic that Salinger was forced to emerge from seclusion and become front-page news for the sake of maintaining his cryptic persona in a court of law.

By revising his biography a third time and finally publishing it in May, Hamilton may have abided by the letter of the law. But by eliminating all evidence of the letters, he has produced a book that isn't worth reading.

To fill out the pages of his already slim biography, Hamilton had to come up with some new material. What he has done is intersperse his unavoidably inconclusive, crazy-quilt version of Salinger's life with discussions of the problems he encountered in writing it. Hamilton includes descriptions of the ethical dilemmas that roamed through his biographer's mind while doing his research. Unfortunately, this results in little more than self-conscious babble as a running side-text.

"It would be a biography, yes, but it would also be a semispoof in which the biographer would play a leading, sometimes comic role," explains Hamilton in a typical passage. "I set off for New York — or we did: me grappling feebly with the moral issues and my biographizing alter ego, now my constant companion, merely eager to get on with the job," he writes in another.

In lieu of pertinent facts and information, Hamilton provides catty character investigation. It's as if Hamilton were no longer a revered literary critic, but one of the "section men" that Franny tells Lane about. "A section man's a person that takes over a class when the professor isn't there," explains Franny. "He's usually a graduate student or something. Anyway, if it's a course in Russian literature, say, he comes in . . . starts knocking Turgenev for about a half hour. Then, when he's finished, when he's completely *ruined* Turgenev for you, he starts talking about Stendhal or somebody he wrote his thesis for his M.A. on. Where I go, the English Department has about ten little section men running around ruining things for people, and they're all so brilliant they can hardly open their mouths — pardon the contradiction. I mean if you get into an argument with them, all they do is get this terribly *benign* expression . . . "

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Pax Through Strength

by E. Christian Kopff

Senate and General: Individual Decision-Making and Roman Foreign Relations 264-194 B.C.
by Arthur M. Eckstein
Berkeley: University of California Press; 381 pp., $39.95

◆

In the general collapse of humane studies that marks the declining decades of the 20th century, a few areas continue to produce important scholarship. One of those fields is Roman history, especially the history of the Roman Republic. Emilio Gabba in Italy, Christian Meier in Germany, Ernst Badian and Togo Salmon in North America, to name some of the best, have produced books and articles that are both original and readable. Arthur Eckstein's *Senate and General* reassures us that this tradition is not dying out. *Senate and General* is as indispensable for understanding the sinuosities of Roman foreign policy as Badian's classic *Foreign Clientelae* (1958).

Was the Roman expansion that ended with the domination of the entire Mediterranean a case of "muddling through," or was it the result of a policy of aggression, carefully monitored by the Roman Senate? The second view has the (sometimes shaky) support of the great Greek historian Polybius, and was at the heart of William Harris's forceful *War and Imperialism in Republican Rome, 327-70 B.C.* (1979). However, Eckstein's close reading of the sources reveals that no single explanation will enable us to understand the enormous transformation that came over the world as Rome moved from its position as the greatest power in Italy in the early 3rd century, B.C., to the dominant force in the Mediterranean just a century later. A number of key decisions, however, from the start of the First Punic War to the defeat of the Macedonian monarchy, which placed Greece in Rome's hands, were made by generals on their own and only later confirmed by the Senate.

Many arguments found here have appeared in Eckstein's articles in scholarly journals. Their presentation in a coherent fashion clarifies as never before just how Roman policy was rooted in a basically defensive senatorial policy that was perpetually evolving in the face of the decisions made by Roman generals, who were themselves affected by many quite diverse factors. Appius Claudius involved Rome in the First Punic War in 264 for glory's sake. Gaius Servilius Geminus' attack on the Gauls in 203 has seemed to many scholars to be the beginning of a major Roman offensive. Eckstein shows that the general was probably trying to rescue his father, who was a Gallic hostage.

In a state that possessed no State Department or any standing bureau-

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cracy, and lacked our means of rapid communication, the settled consensus of the older members of the Senate might be overturned by the exigencies of active warfare, or the glory-seeking of a general out of reach of easy communication. As someone who has lived in Italy for many years, I know how easy it is to plead the unreliability of the Italian mail in order to avoid answering an embarrassing letter. In 223 B.C. Consul Gaius Flaminius set a precedent for this attitude by not opening a message from a politically hostile Senate forbidding him to attack the dangerous Gallic tribes he was sent to watch. He crossed the Po, won a victory, and then opened the dispatch. Although the irate Senate denied Flaminius a triumph, they also instructed the next year's consul to continue to wage vigorous war.

Since the conflicting attitudes found in Harris and Eckstein reflect their diverse political attitudes, are not the two books examples of "politicizing the academy"? I think not. Although neither was written in a political vacuum, their arguments are grounded on reading the ancient sources carefully and insightfully. Politicizing the academy involves rejecting traditional scholarly standards for faddish political ones, and neither Harris nor Eckstein is guilty of that.

Contemporary historians are often led astray by an obsession with "new questions" with which to confront old sources. Eckstein's masterful handling of the Greek sources shows that a thorough philological command of the relevant foreign languages is not only essential for progress in historical studies, but that it can still bear considerable fruit in the form of original and convincing results.

When I said that Roman studies continues to produce important new scholars, I did not mean to imply that the great figures in the study of ancient history were not men raised in the Golden Age before the First World War: Eduard Meyer, Karl Julius Beloch, Gaetano de Sanctis, for instance. It strikes the reader of Eckstein's footnotes how often his new insights are rooted in a query or paralleled by a comment made by one of these great scholars, especially de Sanctis. The futility of much contemporary research is often the fault of young scholars' ignorance of their great predecessors, as Arnaldo Momigiliano once remarked to me. Eckstein's control of past scholarship is as impressive, and as rare, as his command of Polybian Greek.

A.E. Housman told his Cambridge Inaugural audience in 1911:

> Clear wits and right thinking are essentially neither of today nor yesterday, but historically they are rather of yesterday than of today: and to study the greatest of the scholars of the past is to enjoy intercourse with superior minds. . . . Let us not disregard our contemporaries, but let us regard our predecessors more; let us be most encouraged by their agreement, and most disquieted by their dissent.

It may seem paradoxical—though in fact it is not—that such an attitude is the true foundation for creativity in the humanities, today and tomorrow.

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Holding the Fort

by Jeffrey Tucker

John Cardinal O'Connor: At the Storm Center of a Changing American Catholic Church
by Nat Hentoff
New York: Scribner's;
320 pp., $19.95

◆

John Cardinal O'Connor, the distinguished and controversial head of the archdiocese of New York, has played an important role in affecting American politics, both inside and outside the Catholic Church. He is the pope's point man in the battle for the soul of the US Church, and some say if an American were considered for the papacy, Cardinal O'Connor would be the likely choice.

This book pairs the fascinating political struggles of the cardinal with the talents of Nat Hentoff, the hardworking New York journalist and radical social critic, often praised for his fair-mindedness and attention to detail. A self-described "Jewish atheist," Hentoff writes a strongly sympathetic chronicle of the cardinal's battles with critics, mainly leftist interest groups.

Among those assaulting the cardinal with demands are feminists, peace activists, homosexual groups, Jewish leaders, *The New York Times*, and New York Governor Mario Cuomo. The feminists want him to reverse the Catholic stand against birth control, abortion, divorce, and ordaining women to the priesthood. The peaceniks describe him as a Ghengis Khan among the American Catholic bishops (where the opposite is more often true, as Hentoff shows). New York's Jewish leaders vehemently criticize the cardinal for upholding the Vatican position on Israel and for being sympathetic toward the idea of a Palestinian homeland. Governor Cuomo and the cardinal have nearly come to blows on the issue of abortion. O'Connor stands firm throughout.

The most outrageous potshots at the cardinal have come from New York homosexuals. While the cardinal has met with them, expressed concern for their plight, and visited hospitals to pray with AIDS patients, he will not approve of their behavior or grant them equal status in the church. Homosexual groups have harassed him, and even unfurled banners while the cardinal celebrated Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York. One Sunday during Holy Communion, a group of homosexuals walked up front with signs around their necks reading, "I don't receive communion from bigots," and then turned and walked back.

The cardinal's theological conservatism stems from his commitment to the church and his unswerving loyalty to Pope John Paul II. Hentoff largely respects this, but regrets that this loyalty also kept the cardinal from condemning the diplomatic meetings between the Holy Father and Kurt Waldheim, the president of Catholic Austria.

Yet Hentoff and the cardinal agree on more political issues than they disagree on. They both support the burgeoning US welfare state as a test of compassion for the poor, thereby ignoring the reams of scholarship that reveal the connection between state welfare and poverty. Hentoff agrees with the American bishops' letters on economics and nuclear arms, both of

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which the cardinal helped prepare. And they both see capital punishment, abortion, and euthanasia as part of the dangerous and growing "ethic of death."

Hentoff is impressed with the cardinal's personal strength of character, his sensitivity toward others, and his openness, which, to Hentoff, symbolizes the greatest aspect of the post-Vatican II Church. Still, Hentoff devotes the first and last chapters to agitating for further liberalization. Every problem in the American church—the declining numbers of priests, the lack of adherence to the church's moral teachings, etc.—can be solved, Hentoff says, by further abandonment of orthodoxy. He doesn't consider that the church's 20-year crisis is correlated not with the ascent of orthodoxy, but with the descent from traditional ecclesiastical and liturgical teachings.

Yet while the author's bias flaws the book, it does not spoil its strongest theme: how and why has the political ideology of the American Catholic Church come to cut across the boundaries of conventional partisanship? O'Connor is not alone among the US bishops in favoring positions of both the right (Christian morality, pro-life) and the left (welfarism, nuclear disarmament). And given the hierarchy's commitment to social activism, this Catholic version of fusionism will continue to have influence, for better and worse.

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The Way We Do It

by Leo Raditsa

Armageddon in the Classroom: An Examination of Nuclear Education
by Herbert I. London
Lanham, MD: University Press of America

◆

This book gathers important information on the politicization of the schools, even the elementary schools, at the cost of facts—and flight from the world. The means of politicization: "nuclear education" is widespread, according to London's rudimentary evidence. He contacted over 300 major school districts, and 16 of the 162 districts that answered had formal nuclear education programs either at the primary or secondary level, a figure that led him to extrapolate between 12 and 15 percent throughout the country.

But formal curricula do not tell the whole story: every one of the 162 districts reported a "unit" on nuclear weapons somewhere between first and twelfth grade. Of the 16 schools with formal curricula that answered, six found nuclear materials "balanced." The rest found them biased but justified their use with the excuse "that nothing else is available to teach the subject." Asked whether the subject should be taught at all, they replied that "this is a life or death issue that we must confront"—in the schools.

The teachers who had to live with the consequences of the administrators' readiness to yield to pressure were more blunt, the bluntness that comes of living in contradictions: "I don't want to indoctrinate my students, but I am in a trap. The board wants me to teach about nuclear weapons, but the only guides available to me are written by one side."

Ninety percent of schools with formal programs use seven manuals written not by scholars and scientists, but by activist groups whose revealing pedigrees London does not mention. For instance, the Union of Concerned Scientists, responsible for one of the manuals most used, *Choices: A Unit on Conflict and Nuclear War*, numbers few scientist members: a random poll in 1982 of 7,741 scientists turned up only one member, a result that led to the extrapolation of less than 200 members from the 130,000 scientists listed in *American Men and Women of Science*. Or take International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, which won the Nobel Prize in 1985, whose copresident, with Dr. Bernard Lown of Harvard, is Dr. Eugene Chazov, Soviet deputy minister of health, and which divides its membership between members of the Soviet Academy of Medical Sciences and American doctors, "a loony symmetry," an American journalist called it. "Never forget the appeal that the idea of disarmament has in the outside world. All you have to do is say, 'I'm in favor of it,' and that pays big dividends," Khrushchev in September 1960 told Arkady Shevchenko, who worried that the sudden Soviet offer of complete disarmament would undo serious, much more limited, negotiations to control armaments.

Besides their luminous pedigrees, the organizations that design these curricula have cash, a good deal of it from foundations. In 1985 the MacArthur Foundation gave 25 million dollars, over three years, for nuclear education programs—most of it for universities and "think-tanks" but some also for schools, with Ruth Adams (former editor of the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*) as director. In 1987 the Ford Foundation spent four million dollars for peace studies programs, the Carnegie Corporation five to seven million dollars, specifically for "risk reduction centers" in Moscow and Washington to foster contacts between Soviet and American scientists and scholars. The Rockefeller Brothers Fund also gives money to "scholars" in search of ways to prevent a nuclear crisis. Because most of this work does not study the events leading up to our present situation, because it never thinks of learning from the past, it can only provide academic endorsement for political activism.

The manuals and school curricula pretend to openness, but it is an openness that brooks no opposition: "No particular political view other than the desire to end the arms race is embraced," is one of the peace organizations' self-descriptions. They rarely mention deterrence, because mentioning deterrence would mean recognizing actual danger, recognizing that there may be good reasons for nuclear weapons, reasons other than adult irresponsibility.

The "all or nothing" psychology of these groups makes discussion with them next to impossible: "The peace advocates argue that if all Americans were only sensitive to the destructive efforts of nuclear war, we can put the genie back in the bottle." They want to "sensitize" those who disagree, and assume their opponents want nuclear war, not to prevent it through firmness. "Sensitizing" means exciting fear: "I am very scared—very, very scared. Because with a nuclear war, you don't have a chance to survive," the *Harvard Educational Review* quoted a student

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in August 1984. In Jamestown, Pennsylvania in 1985 the intercom system announced a Soviet attack on an American ship, a civics lesson "to make the kids consider the implication of an international crisis in a more realistic way," John Chancellor of NBC commented.

"Experts" blame this fear on the situation, not on activist groups. Robert J. Lifton of Yale came close to relating teenage suicide to fear of nuclear war. A psychoanalytically-oriented historian, an associate of Lifton, found young men haunted by the unreality of nuclear weapons, the unpredictability of existence, the bland vocabulary of annihilation, and the world's insanity—"not at all surprising fears" of scenarios presented out of historical context, London writes, and fears incidentally that flourished long before nuclear weapons. One result of this education: the White House received in 1983 more than 100 letters a day "from frightened, ill-informed children, who in writing to the President, are fulfilling classroom assignments" (according to Senator Orrin Hatch in the *Congressional Record*).

This mobilizing of children, a classic totalitarian technique, assumes children can face realities adults cannot—adults "not yet civilized enough to allow a child to lead us." London correctly writes that "the young have been made pawns in a political movement they did not create and cannot possibly understand." But there are indications that some of the young have more sense than the organizations seeking to manipulate them. John Mack of Harvard Medical School and another "researcher" betrayed impatience with many high-school students who offered grimly to "go to war" to "fight the Russians" after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. To put some good sense into his colleagues, Robert Coles argued that nuclear fears existed largely among the affluent children exposed to campaigns and with fearful parents, not among "workers [who] resent being told they're dumb and numb by upscale preachers of nuclear doom and gloom."

Why do schools, especially school administrators, yield so readily to the pressures of these activist organizations that make them uncomfortable? Why are they not able to say that nuclear education is not an academic subject, as Roger Scruton and Caroline Cox argued in *Encounter* in 1985, and that manuals like *Choices* are "not education . . . but political indoctrination," as *The Washington Post* wrote? This is the real question this book raises.

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Updating Paley

by Bryce J. Christensen

The New Biology: Discovering the Wisdom in Nature
by Robert Augros and George Stanciu
Boston: New Science Library/ Shambala; $22.50

◆

Like many Englishmen of his generation, Charles Darwin in his youth was an avid reader of William Paley's *The Evidences of Christianity* (1794). As Darwin formulated his theory of evolution, he lost his faith in Paley's argument that nature manifests God's wisdom and foresight. "The old argument from design in nature," he wrote in his *Autobiography*, "as given by Paley, which formerly seemed to me so conclusive, fails, now that the law of natural selection has been discovered. We can no longer argue that, for instance, the beautiful hinge of a bivalve shell must have been made like the hinge of a door by man. There seems to be no more design in the variability of organic beings and in the action of natural selection, than in the course which the wind blows." Most of Darwin's readers have agreed, relegating Paley's work to the dustbin of history.

But Paley's line of argument has been revived by Robert Augros and George Stanciu in *The New Biology*. Before proceeding to outline their own paradigm for interpreting nature, the authors (one a philosopher, the other a physicist) attempt to dismantle the Darwinian theory of evolution that has for so long paralyzed thought on the metaphysical issues they raise. Grounded in the latest research in paleontology, ecology, and genetics, this critique of Darwinian orthodoxy exposes some key weaknesses. For instance, Darwinism predicts slow and gradual accumulating adaptations, but the fossil record is punctuated with sharp discontinuities that gave rise to Miles Eldridge's "punctuated equilibrium." More radically, Augros and Stanciu dispute the materialistic premises unthinkingly embraced by most evolutionists. Originally borrowed from physics, these premises remain essential to evolutionary biology, even though theoretical physics has now abandoned them as too narrow and mechanistic. Materialistic evolution fails most visibly when asked to account for human consciousness, but the theory stretches credibility even in its explanations for the appearance of intelligence, purpose, and design in nonhuman species. The origin of life itself still remains a dark mystery, which so far refuses to unravel itself in spontaneous-generation experiments.

As they contemplate the beauties of nature, many of which have no discernible "survival value," the authors posit the necessary existence of a supernatural Artist. "This Artist is God," they urge, "and nature is God's handiwork." The argument advanced must not be mistaken for creationism, which they repudiate as pseudoscience. Rather, in arguing for the evolution of species through divinely directed changes in regulatory genes, the authors offer a sophisticated version of "orthogenesis," refurbished with all of the latest discoveries in molecular biology.

An important book that deserves wide attention, *The New Biology* will stimulate an overdue debate over the first principles of evolutionary biology. Christian biologists, long cowed by orthodox materialists, should particularly welcome a serious reconsideration of a theistic approach. Still, readers should assess this new synthesis with caution. In the first place, it must be remembered that scientific theories, even good ones, do not last forever, but are eventually supplanted. Anyone who embraces a scientific theory as a definitive bulwark for faith runs the risk of eventually imitating the churchmen who rejected Copernicus's theory because of its incompatibility with their dogmatic synthesis of Aristotle and Scripture. Nor can Christians ignore

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the risk of pantheism inherent in the belief that "nature incorporates wisdom, purpose and beauty" and that "ethics . . . can look to nature for a foundation of its principles." Natural evidence of God's goodness and grace does abound, yet believers also detect in nature the effects of the Fall, so memorably described by Milton:

> Earth felt the wound, and
> Nature from her seat
> Sighing through all her Works
> gave signs of woe.

In their eagerness to prove God's governance in nature, Augros and Stanciu implausibly minimize the suffering, pain, conflict, and ugliness also quite visible in nature. No one with personal experience with trichinosis or tapeworms will readily acquiesce to the cheerful assertion that "parasitism is rarely harmful to the host." Nor will readers find it easy to reconcile the claim on one page that predators do not really threaten prey species with the argument on a different page that cicadas have developed remarkable patterns of reproduction to avoid being wiped out by predators.

Augros and Stanciu deserve high praise for rekindling a sense of wonder for the divine patterns in nature. Yet if the study of biology can at times stir a recognition of providential harmony, that study should at other times remind us—through disease, death, decay, and deformity—that we do not live in the Garden of Eden and that in a fallen world the most sublime truths can only be glimpsed "through a glass darkly."

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The Invisible Veep

by Ellis Sandoz

The Body Politic
by Victor Gold and Lynne Cheney
New York: St. Martin's Press;
213 pp., $15.95

◆

Exactly what Vice Presidents of the United States are supposed to do (and not do) always has been something of a political and constitutional mystery. As little as possible, is the recent election's hint. But even in more demanding times the sanitized quip attributed to Texas's John Nance ("Cactus Jack") Garner, FDR's first VP, that the office wasn't worth a bucket of warm spit, seemed the unvarnished truth of the matter. The surmise is that, besides presiding over the Senate and hoping for a tie vote so he can break it, the Vice President need only spend his time as he will and *wait*—in the event something dreadful befalls the President, something like death or impeachment.

Who would notice if the Vice President disappeared for awhile? Say, for six months?

These are the plausible questions premised in the most entertaining political novel of the past year, *The Body Politic*, written by veteran political journalist and PR man Victor Gold and novelist, editor, and chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities Lynne Cheney. The breezy clip of the narrative and language, the insouciance of the dialogue, and the outrageous audacity of the story gain their sure-handedness and verisimilitude from two expert White House insiders. After all, while an authority on life inside the beltway in her own right, Lynne Cheney is also the wife of Congressman Dick Cheney (Republican of Wyoming), who served as President Gerald Ford's chief of staff. And Victor Gold was a speechwriter for Spiro Agnew and George Bush in days past.

In one of his nonpresiding moments, it seems, the novel's imaginary Vice President Bully Vandercleve suffers fatal carnal arrest while enjoying the companionship of network TV anchorwoman Romana Clay. She is visiting for an evening in the Vice President's townhouse while wife Cissy Vandercleve is out of the city. The richest politician in America, former governor of New York and three times a candidate for the presidency, Bully Vandercleve was about to be dumped from the Republican ticket. So he had taken the weekend off to collect himself, to prepare his withdrawal statement, and to salve a wounded ego when the untoward event occurred. With Bully now dead in the bed, Romana won't leave the townhouse until the Secret Service agents assigned to the Vice President are called away from the entrances. She telephones Frank Lee (the Vice President's press secretary) to let him know what has happened and to gain help in finding a way to keep things quiet.

Thus the tale begins. At 0445 hours Frank Lee telephones the President's chief of staff through Army Signal's secure system to let him know that the lame duck Vice President is already a dead duck, only to be curtly rebuffed and told to come to the White House at seven—if the matter still seemed important at that more civilized hour. A cover-up begins that is intended to last only 48 hours and through the next Tuesday's Wisconsin primary. But it goes on, and on, and on through the Super Tuesday primaries and the national election itself.

Eventually it all ends with justice being done. Frank Lee's letter from the "Prison of the Stars" in Allentown, Pennsylvania, dated about one year after the townhouse scene, concludes the book. It explains Operation Avis, as it's called ("Hertz" is the code name for the President), to an inquisitive New Orleans correspondent, Ms. Gwendolyn Dolittle. *Femme fatale* Romana Clay, Frank Lee explains to Ms. Dolittle, "resigned as TV network correspondent when Avis scandal broke. Later wrote best-selling book, *All the Vice President's Men*, soon to be released as motion picture starring Rob Lowe and Demi Moore. Frequently appears as guest host on David Letterman show."

What happened between townhouse and penitentiary is too much fun to ruin by telling more here. Jack Anderson is quoted as thinking that "Gold and Cheney have written what may be the ultimate Washington satire." They surely have written the most hilarious political novel of the season.

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In Search of a Biblical Philosophy of Politics

by E. Calvin Beisner

Beyond Good Intentions: A Biblical View of Politics
by Doug Bandow
Westchester, IL: Crossway Books; 271 pp., $19.95

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Just what is a truly Christian, or biblical, view of politics and government, and what difference does it make for public policy?

Doug Bandow, senior fellow at the Cato Institute, treats this and many other questions with a fresh perspective. Not to be pigeonholed, he works for a largely libertarian think tank but espouses policies libertarians abhor. His views resemble traditional conservatism but differ on important points. He rejects most liberal policies, but embraces liberalism's concern for the vulnerable and its rejection of mixing religion and politics. Frequently, familiar premises lead him to surprising conclusions.

In the first three chapters, Bandow argues that all of society will benefit from Christian perspectives, that the "bipartisan welfare state" has begotten an unjust society, and that this makes clear the need for a political paradigm built on biblical principles. In the next two chapters, he constructs such a paradigm. First he explores what the Bible says about the role of the state, which is chiefly that the state's job is to prevent and punish fraud, theft, and violence while protecting life, liberty, and property (though he allows it some role in helping the needy through positive action). Then he describes seven "Scriptural guidelines" for the state: "limited state power, respect for the believer's right to worship God, regulation of violent and fraudulent conduct, justice and righteousness, help for the needy, moral and social responsibility, and godly virtues."

Next Bandow reminds us that "Christian political involvement must be different from secular or humanist activism because the believer is dedicated to achieving a different ultimate objective, the Kingdom of God." Hence Christians cannot use the state to coerce spiritual virtues, a point he reinforces with a survey of the sad results of Christians' attempts to wed church and state to create the Kingdom of God on earth.

The meat of the book is in chapters 7-9, where Bandow applies biblical principles to specific policy questions. He discusses eight criteria for applying biblical principles to policy issues: (1) "Is there a Scriptural principle on point?" (2) "Does the Scriptural reference apply today?" (3) "Is the Biblical rule mandatory or advisory?" (4) "If there is no Scriptural principle on point, is the proposed policy consistent with the Biblical pattern of government?" (5) "Does the proposal, if not barred by the Bible, weigh costs as well as benefits?" (6) "If a policy's objectives are consistent with God's mandate for civil government, does the specific measure actually promote those goals?" (7) "Is the proposed policy the most cost-effective way to achieve the godly objective?" (8) "Does the Bible give primary responsibility for the issue to a different 'government' [e.g., family, church, individual, etc.]?" Observing the process by which he analyzes problems and reaches conclusions is instructive, regardless whether we agree with his conclusions.

Bandow applies his method to two groups of issues: first, "eight issues where Scripture is not silent" (abortion, birth technologies, criminal justice, divorce, drugs, education, pornography, welfare), and second, 14 "matters where Scripture provides us with little guidance" and which must therefore be approached on prudential rather than principal grounds (agriculture, Central America, comparable worth, military draft, economic regulation, environment, foreign aid, income redistribution, Israel, military alliances, minimum wage, nuclear weapons, protectionism, taxes).

Especially helpful in this discussion is Bandow's clear distinction of principle from prudence. Two serious weaknesses are his lack of sufficient elucidation of the primary principles underlying his analysis ("justice," for instance, goes undefined) and his lack of sufficient examination of specific biblical passages; he misuses some passages and ignores others pertinent to the issues.

The greatest weakness in *Beyond Good Intentions* is Bandow's failure to formulate what he calls for—"an overarching political philosophy" soundly rooted in biblical exegesis. Without that, evangelicals' policy views are bound to float freely begetting the splintered grab bag of special interests that cannot cooperate toward wide-ranging goals or a common vision of the good society.

"Men and nations," wrote Russell Kirk, ". . . are governed by moral laws; and political problems, at bottom, are moral and religious problems." Bandow ably demonstrates this truth, explores some problems inherent in it, and points the way for Christians to grapple with them. That makes *Beyond Good Intentions* rewarding reading.

E. Calvin Beisner is author of Prosperity and Poverty: The Compassionate Use of Resources in a World of Scarcity *(Crossway Books).*

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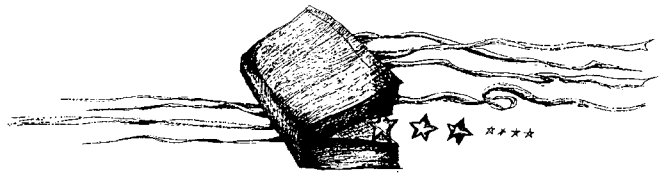

THE BEST OF RHYMES, THE WORST OF RHYMES

"One of the minor disadvantages of being a poet . . . is being continually asked who reads one's poetry. Or who reads poetry." It is easy to appreciate why John Ashbery gave way to this minor fit of pique in the introduction to *The Best American Poetry 1988* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons; 249 pp., $19.95). While Ashbery does run into the odd person who actually reads his own poems, he wonders aloud, "Do even poets read poetry?" and has to confess "to some laziness in this regard." After wasting some time on his anthology, including a typical example of his own anti-verse, I can envy Ashbery's laziness. If this is the best American poetry of 1988, then the state of verse in the US is even worse than I had imagined.

To be fair to the editor, he has made an effort at balance, by representing most of the dominant schools of contemporary verse. Creeley and Koch and Gary Snyder are here, but so are Richard Wilbur and Anthony Hecht. Indeed, it is somewhat surprising to discover several more or less formal specimens in the volume. But to illustrate how far the estate of poetry is sunk, only one or two of the formal poems are really competent: Anthony Hecht's "Envoi"—a poem I positively disliked—stands out as the best-crafted piece in the anthology. John Hollander's attempt at rhyme and meter is listless, and George Bradley's "Noch einmal an Orpheus" is as wooden as anything from the 16th century.

Versification is not a trivial art that can be learned from handbooks or picked up in a summer course. It is a craft that can only be mastered by practice and by a careful reading of the masters. In 1988, competent poets are an endangered species, and their art will probably go the way of stained glass. Some reason for hope, however, is given in two recent collections of serious verse: Robert Richman's *The Direction of Poetry: An Anthology of Rhymed and Metered Verse Written in the English Language Since 1975* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin; 168 pp., $19.95), and "Expansionist Poetry: The New Formalism and the New Narrative," the latest issue of *Crosscurrents, A Quarterly* edited by Dick Allen.

Of the two anthologies, Richman's is broader and more inclusive. Richman, the poetry editor of *The New Criterion*, has the freedom to include some of the best poets who have written in English in the past two decades: X.J. Kennedy, Geoffrey Hill, Howard Nemerov, Richard Wilbur, and Elizabeth Bishop. At the same time he is also reaching out to a variety of "name" poets who occasionally descend to some degree of formality: Donald Justice, May Swenson, Seamus Heaney, John Hollander, and Derek Walcott—all of whom appear in Ashbery's anthology and none of whom does any better in these halfhearted attempts in Richman's book to display their knowledge of the craft. Their inclusion, perhaps, has led to the exclusion of better and more important formal poets.

Dick Allen's special issue of *Crosscurrents*, on the other hand, is a virtual manifesto for restoring meter and narrative to poetry, containing essays as well as verse. "Expansionist Poetry" includes most of the younger leaders of the movement to restore sound and sense to poetry: Dana Gioia, Brad Leithauser, Dick Allen, and Bruce Bawer, and the volume is dedicated—quite appropriately—to X.J. Kennedy. Nevertheless, the real hero, both of the volume and of the movement, is Frederick Turner, whose essays helped to reawaken interest in rhythm, and whose science fiction verse novels are attracting new readers to poetry. Turner is represented by a fine poem, as are Gioia, Timothy Disch, Robert B. Shaw, and Timothy Steele, who also appears in Richman. (A short poem of Thomas Fleming is included there as well, not—in his own opinion—one of his strongest performances.)

If one thing connects many of the so-called neoformalists with the formless poets, it is the lack of ambition. In a wonderful essay, "Poetry and Ambition" (in *Poetry and Ambition: Essays 1982-88*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan; 207 pp.), Donald Hall chides poets for not even attempting to write great verse and complains that "poems have become as instant as coffee or onion soup mix." Hall's solution is to abolish the MFA and the poet workshops that only produce McPoems. I wish I liked Hall's poems more, but he is represented in Ashbery by one of his best pieces and by far the most ambitious poem in the volume, "Prophecy," which is almost worth the price of the book. It is the rare thing, especially these days: a long poem that is rhetorically convincing, rhythmical in a dramatic way, and filled with passionate language:

> Your children will wander
> looting the shopping malls
> for forty years, suffering for your
> idleness,
> until the last dwarf body rots in
> a parking lot.

With the conspicuous exceptions of Geoffrey Hill, Frederick Turner, and the comparatively unknown Richard Kenney, few of the neoformalists represented in these anthologies are willing to take the risks that Hall is taking. Perhaps the problem is with the term neoformalist. There is a fundamental dishonesty in all such neo-logisms, whether it's neo-Nazi or neoliberal. Why not admit it, if what you want to do is write *real* poetry?

The most promising signs are, I think, the younger poets who have begun to take their trade seriously: Timothy Steele (in both), Richard Kenney (Richman), Dana Gioia (who is a businessman, of all things), and Timothy Disch, whose verse is clever even if he does work for *The Nation*. When the present generation of over-50 academic poets dies off, their names (with very few exceptions) will be forgotten and their land will know them not. Illiterate cultures have long memories only when the memory is preserved in song or rhythmical verse. Our anti-literate culture, on the other hand, will be preserved only as a horse laugh echoing from footnote to footnote. (TF)

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Letter From Washington

by Samuel Francis

The Drugged War

◆

When President-elect George Bush announced a week before his inauguration that his new "drug czar" would be former Education Secretary William Bennett, the air began to seep out of the tires of his new presidency before it even got on the road.

Had Mr. Bennett ever participated in a drug arrest, had he ever worked for a law enforcement agency, had he ever conducted a criminal prosecution, had he ever held a top-level security clearance, had he ever dealt with a Third World government or with any of the thugs who habitually run such regimes, then his reincarnation under Mr. Bush as the coordinator of drug policy might be plausible. But the truth is, Bennett has performed none of these elementary functions of criminal justice, and when he appeared with the President-elect in January to share the limelight of his new job, his first stratagem in the war on drugs was to promise to quit smoking.

A week later Mr. Bush, during his inaugural address and in one of the displays of rhetorical passion in which he has learned to indulge, intoned that the scourge of drugs will stop. If his new czar manages to avoid contracting emphysema, that will be progress of a sort, but it will do nothing to sweep up the human garbage responsible for the multibillion-dollar traffic in poison that afflicts the United States. Unless it is swept up, the scourge will continue and eventually will consume the country entirely.

Americans and some of their leaders seem to understand this, and last year Congress mustered its nerve to pass a mammoth antidrug bill. But the new law, which created the post Mr. Bennett now holds, is the kind of measure in which congressional con artists have come to specialize. The law establishes tough penalties for "recreational" use of illegal drugs and permits (but does not require) the death penalty for some murders committed by some drug pushers. Barely a hundred executions have taken place in the United States in the 12 years since the death penalty was restored, and since more than three times that many murders occurred in Washington alone last year and nearly 50 murders took place here in January, the carefully constricted use of the scaffold that the new law allows is probably just for show. Mainly what the law does is increase the amount of federal funds devoted to therapy and education rather than law enforcement. Currently, only about a quarter of federal spending on drug control is directed to education. Under the "omnibus drug bill," that proportion will rise to 50 percent this year and 60 percent thereafter.

The emphasis on education as the preferred means of fighting drugs reflects the now platitudinous idea that, as Mr. Bush himself has said, "The answer to the problem of drugs lies more on solving the demand side of the equation than it does on the supply side, than it does on interdiction or sealing the borders or something of that nature. And so it is going to have to be a major educational effort, and the private sector and the schools are all going to have to be involved in this." The corollary, of course, is that the government shouldn't waste too much time in slamming down organized criminals, smugglers, pushers, and their private torpedoes, that the way to fight drugs is through all the arts of managerial manipulation in which American civilization has come to excel.

Another corollary is that you don't appoint as drug czar someone who is serious about the use of force, including lethal force, against the satraps of the drug empire. Mr. Bennett, *The New Republic* revealed last year, once sent a memorandum over to the Justice Department recommending that the US military "should do to the drug barons what our forces in the Persian Gulf did to Iran's navy." That sounds terrific — except that we didn't do very much to Iran's navy in the Persian Gulf. What we mainly did in the Gulf, in the aftermath of Iranian mine and missile attacks, was to take out a few oil platforms after carefully warning the seagoing mullahs aboard them to get out of the way. We sent a few of the Ayatollah's boats to the bottom and dried off some of his jolly tars after they landed in the drink. If we follow an analogous course of action against the drug barons, the American taxpayer may wind up paying for their sons' college educations.

Mr. Bennett, however, also has made noises about waging what he calls "all-out war on drugs — with more resources for police, more prosecutors, more convictions." Whether his tenure as drug czar will be as ferocious as it sounds remains to be seen, but personally I'm growing tired of hearing about the various "wars" — against poverty, crime, energy shortages, AIDS, terrorism, illiteracy, and child abuse — that professional bureaucrats periodically declare on whatever crisis crept into the headlines last week.

The truth is that American political culture no longer permits the prosecution of any kind of war because the elites that prevail in politics, the economy, and the culture rule and think in terms of manipulation, deception, and sheer fraud rather than force. Whatever problems, threats, and challenges they perceive they define in such a way that only manipulation and not coercion can respond to them. Not only do they manipulate the problem itself, but through public relations and image-mongering, they string along the American public. Criminals are to be rehabilitated and not punished; foreign threats are to be negotiated away or bribed with foreign aid and not fought; and war is redefined as "defense" and delivered into the hands of techno-

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crats-in-uniform whose clearest sight of a battlefield is a computer simulation.

Of course, governance-by-manipulation serves the interests of those who are expert in it. In the case of the "drug war," professional therapists, teachers, public-spirited entertainers, youth counselors, social scientists, and the army of PR technicians who jerk the images and symbols of mass "education" will accumulate small fortunes by battening onto the provisions of the new drug law and digging into the ample funds it places in their hands. Their ideas, knowledge, and opinions will provide the strategies by which the "war" is to be fought, and no doubt Mr. Bennett will have them in the front lines. How their onslaught will be received by the real czars of the global narcotics trade — the Colombian, Jamaican, Asian, and homegrown gangsters who murder whole families for fun and command wealth and weapons that some nations would envy — may easily be foreseen.

In reality, there is no foe in the war against drugs that could not be well met by a county sheriff armed with a wad of Red Man, a couple of .12-gauges, a local posse, and a few yards of strong rope. But the Supreme Court, the ACLU, the Justice Department, the Congress, and the witch doctors of the therapeutic-managerial state have long since taken care of that kind of response. Now we have to depend on the wit, wisdom, and collected memoranda of Mr. Bennett. I hope he's successful in giving up cigarettes.

Samuel Francis is deputy editorial page editor of The Washington Times.

Letter From the Lower Right

by John Shelton Reed

Talkin' Freedom Blues

◆

I was sitting here listening to the University of North Carolina's student radio station play "Hotrod to Hell," a cut from Elvis Hitler's new album *Disgraceland* (you think I could make that up?), and somehow the time seemed right for another round-up of Southern news that they've probably been keeping from you.

Speaking of the higher learning, for example, I'll bet you didn't see the note in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* about the faculty-staff directory at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville that lists under "Education, College of" an entry for the "Readin Center."

The lower learning made the news, too. The Jackson *Clarion-Ledger* reported that Mississippi ranks second only to Arkansas in public-school paddlings. In a recent year nearly fifty thousand Mississippi students — one in eight — heard the tune of the hickory stick. For what it's worth, the Magnolia State also had the lowest percentage of "seriously emotionally disturbed" children in its schools. Spare the rod and — ? No, surely not.

In other news from Southern education, back here in the *soi-disant* Southern Part of Heaven one of our students recently reported the theft of his license plate. Not his car, his license plate — a vanity number that read "POONTANG." Some innocent in the state motor vehicle department must have let that one by, or maybe it's protected by the First Amendment. But the First Amendment cuts both ways when it comes to license plates. I read that ACLU types in Maryland have objected to plates with messages like "GOD IS." At last report, the state was going to recall plates with religious messages. You figure it out.

Not long ago, on US 15-501 between Chapel Hill and Durham (what used to be called the Jefferson Davis Highway — and whatever happened to the signs?) I saw an evil-looking young man with a black goatee driving a car with license number "MB 666." If we're going to interfere with religious messages, let's start with that one, OK?

This religion business does keep coming up when people talk about the South. In the November issue of *Channels*, a trade magazine for broadcasters, a writer of the television program *Designing Women* talked about an episode in which one of the Southern women of the title wants to become a Baptist preacher but is turned down because she's a female. The writer, a Southerner herself, said that even though the show was critical of Baptist traditionalism, it drew "negative comments within the industry" because "some people assumed that we were trying to do a Jerry Falwell thing!"

Poor Jerry. Another cheap shot. But the woman has a point. Apparently treating evangelical Protestantism *at all* is viewed with suspicion. Certainly it is unusual. "You would have thought we'd done a show about the leprechauns or something," the writer said. "No one has ever in the history of prime time television done a sitcom about Baptists. . . ."

By the way, when the National Organization for Women recently published a book called *The State-by-State Guide to Women's Legal Rights*, ranking the states according to how well they comply with the liberal view of what women need, the three "best" were Washington, Massachusetts, and New York. Of the five "worst" only Nevada is outside Dixie; the other four are Mississippi, Alabama, South Carolina, and Georgia — setting for *Designing Women* and Charlene's thwarted vocation.

Ah, Georgia. Did you notice how many of the news stories filed from the Democratic Convention last summer mentioned the number of "table dancing" establishments in Atlanta? It's surprising how many reporters found time to check out this traditional Atlanta art form. Andy Young's municipal government anticipated exactly the sort of stories that were written, but attempts to close these places failed. It's that ol' debbil First Amendment again. (Freedom of expression? Of worship?) Yankees have always said that Southern men put women on pedestals, but I don't think this is what they meant.

Incidentally, I don't know why people haven't done sitcoms about Baptists. Lord knows they can be *funny*. Listen to the Reverend Joseph Chambers, for example. According to the *Charlotte Observer*, he told a meeting on AIDS that "Prayer always works. Condoms work only 80 percent of the time."

Pardon my free-associating, but that reminds me of a recent *New York Times* story about a new champagne. Are you ready for Marquis de Sade Private Reserve Grand Cru, vintage 1981, about $45 the bottle F.O.B. Paris? Its marketing director says: "I don't think it will be a huge success in the Bible Belt." But, he adds, "it will

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do very well in New York, Beverly Hills, and San Francisco." Yes, indeed.

Tell you what, we'd leave them alone if they'd leave *us* alone. But here comes a smarty-pants Washington lawyer—two words that should terrify and nauseate honest folk everywhere—to sue the state of North Carolina, challenging a law that exempts the Bible from state sales tax. The former Duke student is suing on behalf of two members of the ACLU, a Jew, and two Hindus who want Bible-buyers to render unto Caesar.

For my part, I find it charming that North Carolina doesn't tax Holy Writ but (unlike most states) does tax the sale of food. That eloquently bespeaks a conviction that (all together now) man does not live by bread alone. Maybe you read that somewhere.

Incidentally, the *Charlotte Observer* reports that a marketing survey ranking the top hundred markets according to the percentage of households in which the Bible is read regularly put Charlotte 14th, with 28 percent, compared to a national average of 18 percent. I guess cheap Bibles could be one reason.

In a probably unrelated development the Associated Press reports that Charlotte leads the nation in per capita ketchup consumption. (Three of the top five cities were Southern: Atlanta and Memphis were the other two, with Minneapolis and Omaha tagging along.) Rick Carter of the Hickory House in Charlotte said folks put the red goop on "just about everything." "It's just like beer—they suck it down." Between services.

Speaking of things the pinko secular-humanist liberal hermaphrodites don't want us to do, remember the old joke about the teacher who sees some kids kneeling in the hall ("What are you all doing?" "Shooting dice." "Oh, that's all right—I thought you were praying.")? Well, last year in Marion, North Carolina, three children were suspended from grade school not for praying but for preaching. Matthew and Duffey Strode were witnessing outside Eastfield Elementary School one morning before school, when principal Jim Gorst bade them desist and come inside.

Ten-year-old Duffey replied: "Woe unto you, scribes and pharisees."

Not to be outdone, five-year-old Matthew observed: "Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled. But whoremongers and adulterers God will judge."

Six-year-old sister Pepper kept the silence enjoined upon her sex, but the principal suspended all three anyway.

Meanwhile, some other Tar Heel schools faced a different sort of First Amendment issue. Down the road in Durham, an administrator at Githens Junior High School confiscated a student's denim jacket because it had a rebel flag on the sleeve, and a number of other high-school and junior-high students were suspended when they defied orders not to wear such patches. One administrator defended his actions by saying that displays of the flag might cause trouble. A local commentator rightly observed that on that basis Ole Miss was right to refuse admission to James Meredith.

Excuse me if I exit editorializing, would you? This annoys me right smart.

Look, we're not talking here about including the rebel emblem in a state flag the way Mississippi and Georgia do. We're not talking about flying it over the statehouse, like Alabama, or including it as part of policemen's uniforms, like Franklin, Tennessee. We're not talking about selling Confederate flag license plates in state-run agencies, as in North Carolina. In each of these cases, maybe there is something to be said for getting government out of the act. Maybe.

But in Durham all we had was some teenaged Hank Williams Jr. fans who

LIBERAL ARTS

JINGO CRIT, OR PATRIOTISM'S LAST STAND

A foreigner may criticize almost anything more easily than literature. You do not have to be an American to revile the foreign or domestic policies of the United States, at least in the right company; and one can lecture across the land in a European accent on most topics of national or international concern to sympathetic, even enthusiastic audiences. But not, in a foreign accent, on American literature. Condemn the U.S. deficit, by all means, the way Americans eat or dress, or their behavior in the Persian (or Arabian) Gulf. They will love it. But no European had better try lecturing on Faulkner, Frost, or Hemingway in the United States. I have seen American audiences turn pale with fury when a European offers even the most favorable account of the imposing American literary achievement since *Leaves of Grass*. An Italian professor of American literature once told me in near-faultless English and with tears in her eyes that though she could teach such things in an Italian university, and did, no learned conference in the United States would take her views about Hawthorne or Melville seriously, simply because she was not an American. And when Geoffrey Moore, British editor of the *Penguin Book of Modern American Verse* (1954), addressed an international audience on certain qualitative differences between the British and American poetic traditions, the indignation of learned Americans in his audience was boundless—for all that his first academic appointment had been in the United States and his account in no way disparaging of the American achievement.

—from "The Americanness of American Poetry" by George Watson, in the winter 1989 number of the Virginia Quarterly Review

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are proud to be Southern boys. They're not Hitler Youth (the kid whose jacket was taken said in an interview that he thinks "the Klan's a bunch of jerks"). You might ask why schools that long ago abandoned dress codes get to make up new ones on the spot. Since every Satanist and table-dancer in the South seems to be protected by the First Amendment, why not these lads?

Of course, students' rights have never been a big number down here. Recall those paddling statistics. But there is a wonderful irony in the fact that one of the teachers enforcing those improvised rules was reportedly wearing a "Black by Popular Demand" T-shirt.

John Shelton Reed is descended from Baptists. He lives in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and grumbles a lot. But he's grateful to the kind folks who send him clippings.

Letter From Canada

by Neil Cameron

The New Dual Monarchy

◆

Canadians often try to explain the fundamental nature of Canada, both to themselves and to visitors, by comparing it with other countries. The United States most obviously comes to mind, especially since television has increasingly obliterated any differences in American and Canadian popular taste. But there are other analogies that are more instructive. Surface manners and dialect aside, we have much in common with the Australians. In many other respects, we resemble the Scandinavians. Many of us would like to emulate the Swiss, but fear we are rather more like the Belgians.

But an even better case can be made that we are a 20th-century reincarnation of the Habsburg Empire. Ontario corresponds to German Austria, the West and the Atlantic provinces play the part of the Slavs, and above all, Quebec is our Hungary, and like Hungary, Quebec's nationalist aspirations threaten fragmentation of the rest of the political structure. Looking back on the sequence of events that took place in Central Europe after 1848, this parallel becomes more and more alarming. Law 101, the discriminatory language legislation introduced in Quebec by the nationalists in 1977, bears an almost uncanny resemblance to the Hungarian Law of Nationalities of 1868. Our attempts at constitutional compromise over the last decade have largely taken the form of attempting to create a Dual Monarchy in all but name. Montreal is traveling down a road taken by Budapest a century earlier.

There is little current enthusiasm among French Canadians for outright separation, or even for rejecting the capitalist and commercial enticements of English-speaking North America. The late René Lévesque's project to bring about "sovereignty-association" was actually rejected by a majority (60 percent) of the people of Quebec in a referendum eight years ago, and his nationalist Parti Québecois was defeated at the polls four years later. But his principles have been increasingly implemented in practice.

The process began in the 1960's, when the central Canadian government almost casually surrendered much of its power to the provinces, essentially to please Quebec. Quebec collects its own income tax from residents, usually more than they pay to Ottawa. It finances and runs its own social services, including a pension plan separate from the Canada Pension Plan. Above all, Robert Bourassa's Liberal government in Quebec, while taking a conservative policy on economic and business issues, kept Law 101, which makes French the only official language in the province, and prohibits even bilingual signs.

This is to make compulsory a practice that is largely followed anyway throughout most of the province, but it is another story in Montreal, where most of Quebec's one million English-speakers live. Law 101 compels all new immigrants to educate their children in French. But this has done little to change matters: while fluent bilingualism is more and more common among young people of all origins, neither the children of immigrants nor of the long-established become French Canadians, nor do they become supporters of nationalism.

Last December, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that Quebec's total prohibition of commercial signs in English violated the right to freedom of speech and expression, supposedly guaranteed in both the Quebec and Canadian Charters of Rights. But the Court did not endorse total freedom of expression, instead holding that Quebec was entitled to pass legislation designed to "protect" French: for example, requiring that bilingual signs have French in bigger letters.

While Bourassa's election platform had included a promise to restore bilingual signs, the reappearance of nationalist mobs in the street was making him nervous. His bright idea was that English business establishments should be allowed to use bilingual signs indoors, but only French outside. To evade the Court decision, he evoked the "notwithstanding" clause of the new Canadian Constitution, which allows provinces to suspend fundamental rights. He called on everybody to be calm.

They weren't. Immediately after his announcement, nationalists firebombed the offices of Alliance Quebec, a meek and mild lobby group for bilingualism. The Anglos, usually a quiet and law-abiding bunch, began to gather in their own wrathful assemblies, calling for civil disobedience. It is hard to believe that we could manufacture our own version of Belfast or Beirut, but if we avoid doing so, it will not be due to the intelligence, principles, or courage of our current political leadership.

Americans may be surprised that Canada is developing such unpleasantly interesting politics. Up until recently, any dark prophecies they have heard from this side of the border have usually been about the supposedly dire consequences of the Free Trade Agreement with the US. The January *Harper's*, for example, carried an article by Robertson Davies, one of our leading novelists, on "Signing Away Canada's Soul." This essay, which undoubtedly expresses views widely held by our intellectual and cultural establishment, purports to be an account of what Canada is really all about, yet it does not even *mention* the issue of Quebec and the Constitution.

This curious myopia can be largely explained by the fact that, in Canada, intellectual conservatism, unlike that found in Britain and the United States, is still heavily influenced by Toryism, and often by what is called "red"

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Toryism. Red Tories claim some affinity with the paternalist and statist element that so often dominated the British Conservative Party, until that element was cast into the wilderness by Mrs. Thatcher. The real father of the movement was George Grant, a philosopher and essayist who was a highly influential teacher at Ontario and Maritime universities for over three decades.

Grant evolved a synthesis of classical philosophy, Christianity, and Marxism into a coherent but pessimistic vision of Canadian nationalism. From the 1950's to the 1980's, he produced a series of small, closely argued, stimulating, and exasperating books about big subjects: Technology, Empire, Justice. Most of them had a small audience, but one, *Lament for a Nation*, which appeared in 1965, had a wide and profound effect.

Grant argued that liberalism, capitalism, and Americanism were all pretty much the same thing, a Behemoth that was probably irresistible, but to which we should give no encouragement. All over the world, he pointed out, the combination of liberal ideology and capitalist technology was eradicating traditional culture, religion, custom, the sense of history and the tragic. Canada, which had remained something of a Tory bastion as late as the Second World War—loyalist, agricultural, provincial in an admirable sense—was now in the process of being dissolved in this universal solvent.

As might be expected, Grant was not much concerned with providing "practical solutions," the eternal preoccupation of the liberal capitalist. Ironically enough, however, this is just what red Tories set out to provide, solutions that amounted to support for socialist policies at home, protectionist economic relations with the United States, and facile moralism in foreign policy. In fact, Grant's bleak vision wound up as a comforting rationale for the conventional prejudices of fashionable liberalism. The effect has been very strange, like hearing the policies of John Kenneth Galbraith being advocated with arguments from Malcolm Muggeridge.

Grant had flashes of brilliant insight, but he was trying to square a circle. Economic nationalism and statist intervention became highly fashionable doctrines in Canada from the late 1960's to the early 1980's, but when the Trudeau Liberals actually implemented them as policies, the results were mostly disastrous and eventually became highly unpopular. Furthermore, they did nothing at all to halt the growing Americanization of Canadian life; many Canadians began to believe that they might actually do more for their identity by open competition with Americans.

The most astonishing thing about those who liked to call themselves red Tories throughout this period was that they seemed incapable of recognizing the full implications of Pierre Trudeau's determination to provide the country with a written constitution. This document does *not* guarantee private property rights, so it can never be a great force for individual liberty. Its charter of rights explicitly recognizes trendy causes like feminism and homosexual equality, and includes a provision that laws intended to favor these causes cannot be struck down because they violate other principles of individual rights. On the other hand, as already noted, it provides no real protection to provincial minorities, since provincial governments can always use the notwithstanding clause. Most ironically of all, it calls on Canadians to abandon their former attachment to common law and common sense and to appeal to rights and freedoms spelled out in detail, apparently with the implication that any others have gone down the tube. This is a far more serious departure from Toryism than is opening our borders to American trade.

It is also the reason that the political situation in Quebec is potentially more explosive now than it was in the period of noisy nationalism 20 years ago. Trudeau tried to provide a means by which bilingualism and biculturalism were made national rather than provincial, at least on the official level. Mulroney bought Quebec support by offering them explicit recognition as a "distinct society." Bourassa has now shown what it means to have a distinct society; it means you ignore decisions of the Federal Supreme Court. Mulroney, neither red nor blue, but an amiable pragmatist and Quebec native son, will probably dither and equivocate. As we stumble toward disaster, those who call themselves Canadian nationalists and red Tories will still be maundering on about the menace of free trade. They have swallowed the camel and are straining at the gnat.

Neil Cameron is director of the Saint Lawrence Institute in Montreal.

Letter From the Heartland

by Jane Greer

Only in a Place Like This

◆

In America, we can judge the significance of an event by the pre-maturity and questionable taste of the memorabilia it spawns. In mid-January 1989, three months before the Women's International Bowling Congress (WIBC) was scheduled to descend upon Bismarck, North Dakota (pop. 45,000), the J.C. Penney store was selling T-shirts that claimed "I Survived Bowling in the Boonies," and others with an incredible bowling cowgirl clad in Stetson, boots, and miniskirt. That's when we knew this would be *some* blowout.

In December, four months before the event, a travel agent told a relative of mine that if he planned to do any flying out of Bismarck between April and mid-June, he'd better make his reservations quickly—the few planes coming into and out of Bismarck would be full of women bowlers.

And there was even talk of a bill in the legislature to repeal the state's Sunday closing law. Granted, the legislators who did the most talking had been saying the same thing every two years for ten years. But this year they banked on having more greed on their side than the conservatives had, well, Teutonic shortsightedness on theirs. Any *out-of-town* woman with shopping money burning a hole in her pocket should have places to spend it, they muttered, and women in *most* states were used to shopping on Sundays, darn it. Frankly, they said, North Dakota's law was worse than an embarrassment; it was *not modern*.

The figures tell why Bismarck and nearby Mandan acted—and are acting—so uncharacteristically frivolous. Nearly 8,000 WIBC teams will

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Stanford students are no longer required to study the culture that gave them freedom. Thomas Aquinas is out. So are Dante, John Locke, Mill, and Galileo. Rastafarian poetry is in. And with it the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights, Rigoberta Menchu(?), and Marxist Frantz Fanon. And not just at Stanford. Throughout the academic world God, country, liberty and enlightenment have been supplanted by an official ideology of intolerance, racial and class hatred, and revolution. Speakers are shouted down; sometimes attacked. College administrators confer special privileges and immunities on groups they perceive as "victims", while giving harsh discipline to students who represent traditional patriotic values.

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flow through Bismarck-area motels, restaurants, and shopping malls between April 6 and mid-June. (Did you know that Bismarck has the largest mall between Minneapolis and Seattle? It's worth a trip.) There are five people on a team. That's 40,000 people — nearly as many as *live* in Bismarck (Mandan has 15,000). These teams will stay an average of four days. Forty thousand hungry, tired, ready-to-party or ready-to-shop people times four days — it's enough to make city fathers swoon and the downtowners dress up their windows with pins and balls.

And all the time there is the smug knowledge that two weeks after the last of the bowlers leave town, the state's Centennial celebration will begin. *Another* 50,000 people are expected over the long Fourth of July weekend: 50,000 people who came prepared to *spend*. Pabst, the German god of serendipity, is smiling on Bismarck for a change.

North Dakota's most famous daughter, Angie Dickinson, will be in Bismarck for the Centennial festivities from July 1-4. So will Myron Floren, the renowned *South* Dakotan accordionist for North Dakotan Lawrence Welk. Bobby Vee (Fargo, North Dakota), is coming, and so is Roy Clark (not from North Dakota, so it doesn't matter where he's from). North Dakota's famous Western novelist, Louis L'Amour, is dead. President Bush has been invited, although this isn't one of his home states.

There is a special Centennial commission, and one of its duties is to sanction special Centennial events and products — Centennial mugs containing lite salad dressing, Centennial marble etchings of moose and bison, Centennial honey, gigantic Centennial belt buckles for Centennial jeans.

Hundreds of Germans and Norwegians — *real* ones, from Germany and Norway — have chosen to leave the fjords and the Alps and come to Bismarck for the Centennial. (Those jokes they tell about each other's intelligence appear to be true.) There will be a choir from the People's Republic of China, a cavalry unit, a 300-unit wagon train parade, and an Indian camp. (Apparently there's still a law on the North Dakota books making it legal to shoot an Indian from a wagon train. Some of the Indians are nervous about that law, but there's no move in the legislature to repeal *it*.) There will be four full days of ethnic and patriotic activities across the state, with the "Party of the Century" in the capital city, mostly on the capitol grounds (there's also a bill to make Monday, July 3, a state holiday just for this year), and on the 4th a local network affiliate will devote the entire day and evening to the festivities.

The seventeen-story capitol building may be outlined with Christmas tree bulbs at night. Another suggestion was thousands of candles in little holders, the light from which would shine up and onto the face of the capitol building — but this year will probably be as dangerously dry as last. At this writing, various committees are busy finding parking and housing for all the expected cars and RV's. Then there are the porta-potties, telephones, first-aid units, and handicapped access problems to worry about, and the biggest problem of all — finding enough ice for all the concessions — especially if it's over 100 and windy, the way it was last year.

Of course, the god Pabst could solve that problem, too.

All of this is corny as hell, and no, you won't find it happening in major metropolitan centers. It only happens where there is a possibility of *community life*. And when it *does* happen, people *know* it's corny and *like* it that way. There is a huge intrinsic difference between the flawlessly choreographed festivities put on by paid PR experts in, say, New York City on our nation's Bicentennial 13 years ago, and these little but bighearted local and regional explosions of exuberance and sentimentality. The difference is that the small, corny celebrations are *authentic*, or they don't happen.

Take the women bowlers (*please*). Struggling Bismarck businesses knew four years ago, when the Convention and Visitors Bureau announced that they'd nailed up that convention, that it meant Something Big. They weren't sure what or how much, and time will tell whether the estimates are right; in January, Bismarck television and newspaper editorials were still wondering where all those women were going to sleep, and whether Bismarck had bitten off more than it could chew, ruining its chances of ever getting another big convention. But the townspeople, most of them, are grateful and prepared to take advantage of the gift. They're willing to have faith that the WIBC will do some good, directly or indirectly, for nearly everyone in the city. Who in New York or Chicago or Los Angeles could ever say that? Who there still believes that *anything* good can happen to a large number of ordinary people?

As for the North Dakota State Centennial, it's nothing more — or less — than one huge family reunion, with some guests invited. Families and friends will be drawing together not only from all over the country, but from all over the world. Residents will be opening up their homes to strangers, for free. In North Dakota, people just haven't come that *far*, psychologically speaking, from the days when the horse was their best means of transportation and there was only "Dakota" — and they're tenaciously proud of that pioneer racial memory. They would hold this hundred-year celebration even if there *weren't* money to make. They would hold it if it *cost* them money — and it will, many of them. North Dakotans (and South Dakotans, and Montanans, and Washingtonians) will, in 1989, buy their T-shirts and hats and jackets and buttons and belt buckles and lite salad dressing in sanctioned Centennial mugs. Those who live in Bismarck or anywhere for 50 miles around the state capital will open their doors to all the relatives and anyone else who wants to sleep on a cot or on the floor.

When they're caught at it, they'll grin and shrug, "I may not be around for the next one."

Jane Greer edits Plains Poetry Journal.

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Letter From Europe

by Thomas Molnar

Kingdoms of the Future

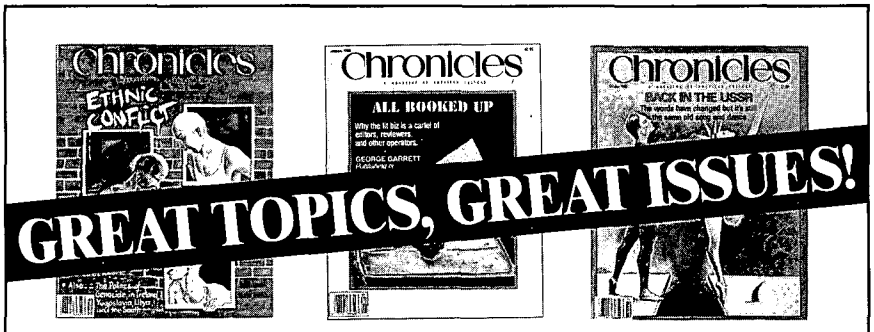
◆

The invitation to the first symposium came from my old alma mater, the Free University of Brussels, founded by liberals, freemasons, and socialists, all united in their opposition to the Catholic Church, embodied by the 15th-century University of Louvain. Nostalgia drove me to the once well-known *quartiers*, or rather what remains of them now that Brussels has ceased being the cozy, petit-bourgeois capital of a small country but has instead become Europe's bureaucratic capital, with high-rise office buildings among the many still remaining one- or two-story houses. My host was the sociological/political Center of Studies, a part of the Free University, itself now split between Flemings and Francophones.

The topic of the symposium was intriguing: "the end of politics," brilliantly introduced by Prof. Maurice Weyembergh. The day before the conference began, Weyembergh explained his theory to me over a cup of coffee in one of the 14th-century inns of the still beautiful Grand' Place. Politics is the conflict between *us* and *them*, its essence mutual exclusion of the other class, nation, empire, or interests. With the emergence of technology and the planetary state, the coalesced mankind cannot be far in the future, and the technocrats are working on the "exclusion of exclusion"—a leveled state of affairs where, since all interests will first be reduced to the basic and then satisfied, the concept of "others" will be eliminated.

Now in the United States, where technology and the various techniques it encourages are at home, we are not worried about this alleged closing of the political (and with it, the cultural) horizon. But Europeans are obsessed with it, fearing that their multiform politics and cultures will meld in an impersonal magma—Kafka, Dostoyevsky, Aldous Huxley, and Jacques Ellul to whom Weyembergh owes an admitted debt, all warned of this peril. The participants in the symposium represented various approaches to this central concern, and were divided about half and half between hope and alarm, Weyembergh playing the Socratic role by provoking both agreement and dissent. Pierre Birnbaum from France spoke of the "cultural code" of every nation that protects it from too deep a penetration by foreign influence—thus the *us* and *them* would remain constants. Another speaker referred to my critique of utopianism linked to heresies, and drew the conclusion that religions represent the nuclei of inimitable affirmations, and that therefore they opt for "ecumenism" in periods of decline only. (At which time other religions and churches—intolerant and exclusive—emerge.) Weyembergh's pregnant proposition about the "end of politics" was, in the end, refuted. But the justified fear of technology, a new and dangerous ideology, remained. Its monsters are now darkening the skyline of old Brussels.

Belgium prepared me for the other symposium where I was now heading; Belgium, where the linguistic and ethnic conflict is so serious that the Walloons refuse to learn Netherlandish in school, and the Flemings set up institutions of their own where French is banned. Brussels can no longer arbitrate, as was the case in my student days; the sole mediator remains the institution of monarchy and the pres-



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ent king, Baudouin, to whom all pay respectful tribute. Respect for the monarchy was awaiting me in Nice also, where the symposium was devoted to the "art patronage of the Capetian kings." You may remember that when Louis XVI was beheaded in 1793, he was first stripped of his royal titles and sentenced as the simple citizen "Louis Capet." In 1987 France was celebrating the coronation of the first king by that name, Hugh Capet (987), and the whole calendar was studded with commemorative events. The matter is the more *piquant* as this year (1989) the bicentennial of the French Revolution will be the focus of national attention.

It is hard to imagine in America that a substantial segment of the French — young and old, poor and rich, Communist and reactionary — have remained devoted to the monarchy and its historic role of arbitration. They have had enough of the party system, and their attachment to democracy is less to the institutions than to the desire to run their own affairs locally. It is, then, no surprise that the provinces throughout France organized their own festivities in honor of the "40 kings who made France," and that the French Academy devoted a special session of commemoration. Not only the Académie Francaise (founded by Richelieu under Louis XIV) but also the French National Assembly celebrated the crowning of Hugh Capet — socialists and Communists present and respectful of the event.

The symposium in Nice was one of the year's last celebrations. Professors, art historians, curators and directors of museums, and academicians (Michael Déon, the novelist) were invited to speak in the amphitheater of the Mediterranean University. Princess Bourbon-Lobkowitz presided, linking in one name east and west Europe, and the Benedictine Dom Guillou spoke admirably of Versailles. I thought that with the bad weather and Christmas approaching, only a few curious would show up. Yet there were at least 300 of us, greeted by the mayor of Nice, Jacques Médicin, an outspoken *enfant terrible* of French politics.

I sat through the lectures with fascination. They were all precise, professional essays and studies on what the kings created and inspired in architecture, painting, music, dance, sculpture, landscaping (parks), even in porcelain and the miniature arts. From the exquisite Sainte-Chapelle in Paris (St. Louis) to the ballet performances at the court of Versailles, the kings were the patrons, hosts to artists, protectors of science and literature, and above all men of taste who discussed matters of concept and design with artists, artisans, builders, and composers, exactly like the Renaissance princes and popes of Italy. One lecturer introduced us to Louis XIV's dances and music, and to psalms composed by his father, Louis XIII. With contemporary rock as a contrast, the royal music from the 17th century flowed over us, soothingly reassuring us that 20th-century "culture" is but a nightmarish interlude. The music and the architecture together expressed the harmony of an age, suggesting that what was once achieved may be again repeated.

Fittingly, the crowning achievement came at the end. The Benedictine monk presented an hour-long documentary on Versailles, prepared by M. Barba-Negra, a Romanian refugee directing films about France's architectural and urbanistic treasures. Barba-Negra's *Versailles* is one of the most stupendous spectacles I ever saw on the screen; it hauntingly goes over the rooms, the halls, the statues, the parks, the fountains and lakes, insisting, ceaselessly, on the ever-present symbols willed by the king and his fellow planners. The film's musical pieces are from the same period, creating together the impression of a dance, a symphonic piece, a choreography of stone and water, light and shadow, perspective and majesty. For an hour we were overwhelmed by beauty, by *meaning*, so tragically lacking in our symbolless age.

The following morning was Sunday, and I went to Mass at one of the town's delightful baroque churches. (It was of course the traditional Latin Mass, the Tridentine.) It was a beautiful morning, the sun evoking the previous evening's documentary about the sun-king. The church was fully packed, and the Mass lasted for an hour and a half. I suddenly realized that I was witnessing the continuation of the film on Versailles. Looking at both, the word "ballet" came irresistibly to mind. I understood then and there a connection so obvious that it had never occurred to me before; the majesty of the ceremonial occasion, the perfect choreography of the Mass and of the Palace, the quality of a sacred dance. The archbishop was assisted by nine priests (no concelebration!), all engaged in precise movements, reenacting the supreme sacrifice — the way *Versailles* reenacted the course through which a man, Louis Capet, becomes king. What better way of penetrating the essence of culture? We all belong to the same mankind — but through acts of culture distinctions are made, beauty elevating some, creating a magic field within which the others — the faithful, the admirers, the participants, even the spectators — are transformed: more, transported to another realm. Thus they become actors on a stage. They become, even for a short hour, different men and women.

Thomas Molnar is the author of The Pagan Temptation.

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COMMONWEAL

Jeanne Berg

Reviving the Merchant Marine

by Morris Guralnick

In the years following World War II, the merchant marine of the United States went from being the greatest in the world to its present virtual nonexistence. From 1935 through World War II, the United States built some 6,500 merchant ships. When the guns ceased firing, the United States owned the largest merchant fleet in the world. Even in the mid-1950's, we had more than 40 major operating companies. But in the years that followed the war we quickly lost our merchant fleet; we scrapped many ships and sold others. Today there remain only about 370 active ships, plus another 100 inactive but still useful. There are only eight operating companies, of which several are clinging to life by a thread. Although some of the old ships are still afloat, the remainder of the war fleet is no longer physically or economically useful. We have practically no viable reserve fleet. Of the 15 maritime nations, we rank 14th.

There have been estimable but abortive efforts to revive the merchant marine, and well-intentioned promises by Democrats and Republicans alike, including Michael Dukakis and Richard Nixon, not to mention desperate struggles by private entities, but this decline has continued. Despite the fact that we are the world's largest trading nation, producing over 60 percent of the goods passing through our ports, we move only 4 percent of this cargo in our own ships.

To people in the field, it is apparent that a viable and active merchant marine would provide us with both an improved economy and enhanced military safety. Unfortunately, the public at large is too preoccupied with more immediate pressures to think about the merchant marine, while Congress and whatever administration is in office have neglected their duty to reverse our decline in shipping.

Scholarly investigations of other nations' maintenance of merchant fleets testify to the benefits. The Atlantic Council of the US has found that "The Soviet merchant marine and fishing fleet make substantial contributions to the Soviet economy, as well as providing significant opportunities to influence the economic growth and political affiliation of Third World countries." These are serious matters affecting all of us, not merely shipbuilders, operators, and special cadres of labor. Of all the world's seafaring nations, the United States is alone in neglecting its merchant fleet. All by itself, this should warn us that something is amiss. It is damaging to our economy to leave the movement of cargo to foreign nations, and we would be unable to supply our fighting men if an enemy attacked us.

The United States undertook emergency construction of merchant fleets on two occasions preceding and during the world wars. Although we may be rightfully proud of our ability to produce ships under pressure, it is important to realize that these efforts were expensive. Also, as is not so well known, the vessels produced were technologically behind the times. That was to be expected considering the circumstances —the ships were strictly "war babies," intended only for war and built in a hurry. An orderly production of a merchant fleet would seem to be a more logical and economical process.

In 1985, Congress established a Commission on the Merchant Marine and Defense to study and report on its problems as they affect the nation's economy and national defense. However, the Bennett Commission, as it is commonly known, was only another study group, and its findings will only reach a dusty shelf in a dusty library. But others are interested. In recent years, the sorry condition of our merchant marine has attracted the attention of people like Paula J. Petarino at Georgetown's Center for Strategic and International Studies, the late Samuel E. Morison of Harvard, Leo J. Donovan of Booz, Allen, and Hamilton, and Rep. Helen D. Bentley. This matter has even been brought up by the novelist Tom Clancy, who had some harsh words about our negligence in *Red Storm Rising*.

"Another use for U.S.-flag ships would be to provide U.S. aid 'in kind' rather than in cash," Rear Admiral J.J. Ekelund, president of California Maritime Academy, has written. "For example: We give dollars to Egypt, and Egypt buys grain from Argentina. We could, instead, provide grain to Egypt, and ship it in U.S.-flag ships." Clinton Whitehurst of Clemson University has maintained that "any more major [ship]yard closures will impose an unacceptable risk to national security. . . . In my opinion, the present support programs are not adequate to the task. If this assessment is accepted, then an expanded program to ensure the viability of the presently existing shipyard industry must be put in place now."

Shipbuilding has been a major activity on our shores, lakes, and rivers since colonial days. Modern shipyards are assembly plants dependent upon hundreds of organizations all over the country that research, mine, and manufacture the myriad items that go into making a ship. Today we have only 22 shipyards that are capable of building large, seagoing ships. Since 1965, 55 yards have closed up shop (among

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them Grace Line, United Fruit Co., Weyerhauser S.S. Co., Prudential Line, Lockheed Shipbuilding Co., and General Dynamics).

Ship operation has proven to be a marked casualty of the decline in the merchant marine. Competition from foreign lines and other forms of internal transportation have resulted in the demise of most of the old-line companies. In the past ten years, more than 60,000 seagoing jobs have vanished, and about 35,000 jobs in shipbuilding were also lost in this same period. If the present rate of loss continues, another 35,000 will go by the board in the 90's. The disruption to our economy has been enormous, especially when we consider the loss to widely dispersed machinery and equipment manufacturers. Not to be forgotten either is the serious loss of skills when workmen abandon so precarious a trade.

Ports of the United States are facing a leveling or loss of revenue. This is a result of severe competition among themselves, overbuilding of facilities, and reduction in federal assistance. But of all segments of the industry, the ports are least affected by the reduction of United States shipping because they still accommodate foreign ships.

With all the facts before it, our government can do no more than stumble over its feet. During President Nixon's administration, a cargo preference bill was proposed to Congress. (Cargo preference, sometimes called cabotage law, requires that a given percentage of goods originating in the United States must be transported in United States ships.) Congress failed to pass the legislation when certain elements within and without the industry vigorously opposed it. In the Ford administration, a somewhat revised cargo preference bill was again introduced, and this time Congress passed it only to have President Ford veto the bill.

Other nations encourage their people to build and operate ships by providing outright financial subsidies and also indirectly, by means of tax benefits, low interest rates on loans, advantageous accounting practices, contracts for carrying mail, and cabotage laws. The reason for this encouragement is, again, that shipping directly and indirectly improves a nation's economy. Funds that are generated for an economy by shipping more than pay for the cost of building and running the ships. That is why England, Germany, Japan, Taiwan, Holland, the Soviet Union, Poland, France, Italy, China, Israel, Greece, Norway, Sweden, Australia, and many other nations have fleets of ships. Our federal government might well adopt this same course to its own eventual benefit. The returns would be far greater than the expense.

Consider also the much-discussed imbalance of foreign trade, by which cost of imports far exceeds the income of exports. In an effort to alleviate the foreign trade deficit, the government has devalued our money (to little effect). If we operated sufficient shipping to move a much greater quantity of our produce, we would be taking a big step forward to correct this imbalance. Legislation has been passed that requires us to transport 50 percent of United States-produced goods in our native-built and -manned ships, but we have failed to implement these laws.

Finally, in terms of national defense, history has shown that ships cannot be built overnight. Most of us are not old enough to remember that *not one ship* of the emergency fleet built for World War I was completed on time to sail with war goods. The invasion of Europe in World War II was delayed a year for lack of supply ships, even though we had a going merchant fleet at the time. Not until a cargo fleet of sufficient size was assembled could we assure our soldiers that they would have all the ammunition, food, gasoline, and other supplies they needed to avoid being left high and dry on the beaches of Normandy. Many lives would have been saved and the war could have ended a year earlier if we had the ships on time to support the troops.

As for the present, we completed only eight major new merchant ships in 1986 and 1987. No orders for new cargo ships have been placed since 1984, though there may be a few orders in 1989. Even with respect to only transporting military cargos, our operational fleet is dangerously small. In the event of an emergency, we would be woefully unprepared to move men and supplies. Our reserve fleet is useless for this task and is fit only for scrap. Putting soldiers, crew, and cargo in these relics to send them overseas in time of emergency is unthinkable. We have no right, morally or logically, to depend on what is left of these decrepit reserve fleet ships; they are too few, too slow, too inefficient, and too worn.

Should we become involved in another major conflict, we will again be caught without the ships essential to fight a war unless adequate preparations are made in advance. In the past, we built ships in a hurry and paid at least twice the price they would have cost normally. In spite of the difficulties, we managed the job. But there may not be a third chance. As former CNO Admiral Thomas Hayward succinctly remarked about the next conflict, "It will be a come-as-you-are war!"

Morris Guralnick is a naval architect living in Oakland, California.

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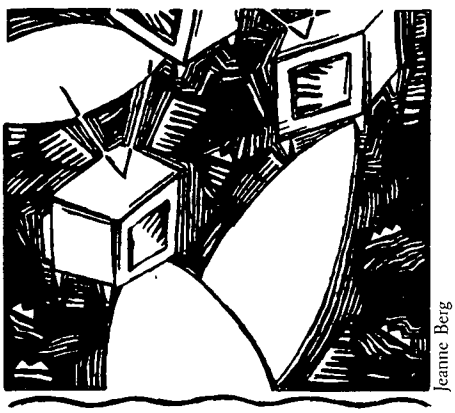

Jeanne Berg

Newshound

by Janet Scott Barlow

Back in September, *USA Today* (circ. 1,400,000), in its equivalent of the man-on-the-street interview, asked citizens at random, "Do we need a federal death penalty for drug-related murders?" That same week, the Adair County *News-Statesman* (circ. 3,800; advertising slogan: "The only newspaper in the world that covers Adair County") asked *its* man-on-the-street question: "What do you think about this cool weather we're having?" By journalistic standards, these two questions would suggest that a large mass-

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circulation newspaper is better than a small local newspaper at addressing issues of major significance. But from a less rigid perspective the questions reveal something else: there are places in America where the end of a hot spell just naturally qualifies as "current events." (By the same token, there are places in America where some events are rather less current than the weather. When asked by *The News-Statesman*, "What is Yom Kippur?" one Adair Countian responded point-blank, "I never heard of it." Said another, "I think it has something to do with sweet potatoes.")

The county seat of Adair County is Columbia, home of both *The News-Statesman* and my parents, who see to it that I never miss an issue. The main thing to know about Columbia is that it is a town of small farms and family businesses located in south-central Kentucky. The first thing to know about *The News-Statesman* is that it was for years called the *Daily Statesman*—this despite the fact that the paper had always been published, at most, four times a week—and is still referred to as simply the *Statesman* because the new name never quite took. And the best way to learn something about both the town and its newspaper is to read the *Statesman*'s coverage of the annual Bell Pepper Festival, Columbia's biggest event of the year.

Never having been in Columbia during Festival week, I read about the proceedings the way some people read about Mardi Gras in New Orleans—imagination working overtime, full of desire to experience it all firsthand: the tractor judging, the baby show, the crowning of the Bell Pepper Queen, the grand parade, and, as the *Statesman* puts it, "the contest with which the Festival wouldn't be the same without," the Prize Pepper competition itself.

As if that weren't enough, there is also the Ugly Man contest, which is easily the most philosophically complex event of the whole Bell Pepper Festival. Because Ugly Man entrants are judged by the absolute standard of "pure ugly" and because not only a winner but a runner-up is chosen, the contest raises an interesting question. Is it better to "win" and be celebrated as the ugliest man in the county, or to "lose" and not be celebrated as the ugliest man in the county? On the other hand, the contest is voluntary, it raises money for charity, and everyone seems to have a good time; so maybe philosophical questions are just for wet blankets.

During the 50 weeks of the year when it is not reporting on the Bell Pepper Festival, the *Statesman* is pretty much like any other newspaper in format—a blend of "major" stories, local news, editorials, sports coverage, and women's features. But a glance through *Statesman* back issues reveals that the mix is always more distinctive, more arresting, than anything to be found in a major metropolitan daily. For instance, there is the story about an Adair County fix-it man that ran under the curious headline GLEN COFER WILL REPAIR ANYTHING THAT RUNS. There is a medical series with eye-catching titles like SENILITY—MYTH OR MADNESS? and THE GOLDEN PERIOD OF WHIPLASH INJURIES. There is enough reporting on the seeding, setting, suckering, topping, curing, and stripping of tobacco to satisfy a community of tobacco farmers and confound everyone else. (Bell peppers or no bell peppers, Adair County's main crop, its money crop, is burley tobacco.) And there are articles that seem best left unread by non-farming, non-Adair Countians: ANIMAL WASTE TOUR TO BE HELD FRIDAY, AUGUST 8.

Finally, there are the read-between-the-lines articles, the ones that reveal more than they appear to. Like the one about a fund-raiser for the church founded by Elbert Hadley. What is interesting here is not the event being noted but the mere mention of the church, a church that was established by Mr. Hadley in direct response to his former denomination's demand that he either pursue legitimate ministerial ordination or stop his weekend preaching. In naming his new church, Mr. Hadley acted with both boldness and pragmatism. He named it Hadley's Church—a move that instantly turned Mr. Hadley into Reverend Hadley and pretty much settled the entire issue, at least as far as Reverend Hadley was concerned.

Moving on to the *Statesman*'s sports section can be something of a jolt. Sports is a large but erratic section of the *Statesman* and a rather forlorn part of the paper during football season, when the Adair County Indians seem eternally to be "looking for their first win of the season." But things pick up considerably with the start of basketball, a sport Adair Countians take very seriously. Indeed, they take it so seriously that the *Statesman*'s publisher, in his regular column "Free Speech," recently concluded that the American defeat by the Soviet Union in Olympic basketball was a result of "the erosion of traditional American values" brought on by "liberal courts [taking] the Pledge of Allegiance and Lord's Prayer out of our public school system." (*Sports Illustrated* attributed the Americans' loss to an ineffective offense and a misconceived defense—a suspect assessment, since *Sports Illustrated* obviously looks on basketball as some kind of *game*.)

The *Statesman*'s news and sports coverage is always, at the very least, thought-provoking. But it is invariably the Ladies' Corner, my favorite section of the paper, that I turn to first. You can find just about anything in the Ladies' Corner, and usually you can find it all at once. New uses for empty egg cartons are offered up between the biblical plan of salvation and dessert recipes that always seem to call for three cups of marshmallows. Tips on growing healthier roses are followed by the information that the glue on a postage stamp contains one-tenth of a calorie. It's in the Ladies Corner that you can find out what to do when drawers stick or the lawn mower stalls in wet grass. It's here that you can learn how to reheat leftover popcorn, remove grease stains from work clothes, make bell pepper jelly, and get into Heaven. Try finding *that* in *The New York Times*.

And on really special days, you can find a Ladies' Corner bonus—the Poet's Corner. The poetry in the Poet's Corner is, literally, unforgettable. In spite of my best efforts, I quote from memory:

> Prom Night, Prom Night,
> eighty-five,
> Will everyone come home
> alive?
> Will many leave once the
> prom commences

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And yield to the lustful part
of their senses . . .

And on it goes, as merciless in its warning to prom-bound Adair County youth as some ancient mountain ballad. Have fun, kids.

Occasionally an Adair Countian makes news that is too big to be contained in the *Statesman*. Such is the case of Oconal Tucker, whose story made it all the way to a Byron Crawford column in *The Louisville Courier-Journal*. It seems that Mr. Tucker, tired of "laying on the ground and getting so stiff I couldn't hardly get up," decided to "build me something I can flop back on." That something was a hammock fashioned from a rollaway bed, which Mr. Tucker suspended from log chains "between a young water maple and a box elder" right in his front yard. So pleased was Mr. Tucker with this arrangement that he topped it off with a canopy roof ("complete with gutter and downspout"), then outfitted the place with "a television, fan, overhead radio, water hose, and rearview mirror," as well as an insulated cooler. (Having personally seen Mr. Tucker's rest area, I think it is somehow relevant to note that a large bullwhip also resides among his conveniences.)

When Mr. Tucker is not "asleep or fishing," he lies in his hammock, watching television and enjoying a cold drink. And when Mr. Tucker tires of TV, he entertains himself by "spraying passing dogs with the garden hose" at his side. Mr. Tucker says that all would be perfection were it not for the irritants of honking car horns and low-flying birds.

What this story proves (beyond the lesson that even the simple need to flop back can inspire the can-do spirit) is, I think, the same thing the Adair County *News-Statesman* proves with every issue: small events can make interesting news. At the very least, they can make for memorable news. My only recollection of the responses of my fellow citizens to *USA Today*'s question about the death penalty for drug-related murders is that some were for it and some were against it. But I remember precisely Ores Ferguson's perfectly reasoned reply to the *Statesman*'s question about "this cool weather we're having." "I like it very much," said Mr. Ferguson, "because I don't get so hot or sweat so much." No doubt Oconal Tucker, if he is awake, would agree.

Janet Scott Barlow covers popular culture from her home in Cincinnati.

BUSINESS

Jeanne Berg

The Restructuring of America

by Thomas L. Mammoser

Restructuring: that's *one* way the recent wave of take-overs, break-ups, and buyouts of major US corporations has been described.

Others see it in more pejorative terms. "Violating the rules of prudence" said a *Wall Street Journal* editorial. "The buyout bomb," *The New York Times* called it. "When everything's for sale, you lose something," is the way Harold Geneen, former chairman of the huge conglomerate, ITT, puts it.

Even the lawyers, who sometimes pocket fees running into the millions of dollars from these transactions, are getting nervous. Martin Lipton, one of the best (and richest; he's the father of "poison pills" designed to thwart take-overs), wrote to his clients in October: "Our nation is blindly rushing to the precipice. As with tulip bulbs, South Sea bubbles, pyramid investment trusts, Florida land, REITs, LDC loans, Texas banks, and all the other market frenzies of the past, the denouement will be a crash.

"We and our children will pay a gigantic price for allowing abusive take-over tactics and boot-strap, junk-bond takeovers. . . . While the rest of the industrialized world is investing for the future, we are squandering our assets in a speculative binge of junk bonds, financial futures, program trading, put and call options and the other games of today's financial market casinos."

Some of the most famous names in America are involved. Sears, Roebuck, Pillsbury, Kraft, Woolworth. The amount of money boggles the mind. Philip Morris antes up $13.5 *billion* for Kraft, a company with sales of a mere $9 billion. KKR (Kohlberg, Kravis & Roberts, the undisputed buyout kings) gobbles up RJR Nabisco for a whopping $25 billion, leaving RJR Nabisco with more debt than the combined national debt of Bolivia, Jamaica, Uruguay, Costa Rica, and Honduras.

The threat of takeover has even put the world's tallest building — the Sears Tower — on the block, with the expected $1 billion in proceeds destined to help Sears' restructuring.

What kind of a guy, by the way, is Henry Kravis, forty-four-year-old potentate of the buyout game? Interviewed at length by *Fortune* after the bloody RJR Nabisco deal, we learn that he is not "greedy." "Greed really turns me off," claims King Henry. "To me, money means security." Henry's pretty secure, by the way, with an estimated $50 million in yearly income from takeover fees.

Kravis prefers to consider himself "fortunate," and according to *Fortune* he "redistributes" his excess income to hospitals, education, and "the fight against AIDS." (No mention was made about outplacement counseling for the thousands who lose their jobs in these buyouts.)

As for KKR itself, it is now the second largest conglomerate in the US, only slightly behind General Electric in annual revenues. The company's powerful duo controls a total of $40 billion, enough to buy out all the Fortune 500 companies headquartered in Minneapolis.

KKR and its like have put a lot of companies in play . . . and out of play, over the past several years. From 1985 to 1987 the value of mergers and acquisitions in the US exceeded $520

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billion—*ten times* the value of mergers between 1975 and 1977. Businesses representing up to 7 percent of the total market value of all US companies have disappeared through acquisitions in each of the past four years.

Now even a partner in a leveraged buyout firm—Theodore Forstmann—thinks things have gotten out of hand. As he puts it: "Watching these deals get done is like watching a herd of drunk drivers take to the highway on New Year's Eve. You cannot tell who will hit whom, but you know it's dangerous."

Forstmann thinks today's financial age "has become a period of unbridled excess, with accepted risk soaring out of proportion to possible reward. Every week, with ever-increasing levels of irresponsibility, many billions of dollars in American assets are being saddled with debt that has virtually no chance of being repaid.

"Most of this is happening for the short-term benefit of Wall Street's investment bankers, lawyers, leveraged buyout firms and junk-bond dealers at the long term expense of Main Street's employees, communities, companies and investors," he added.

Who's to blame? Bill Neikirk, financial editor of the *Chicago Tribune*, blames everyone. As he puts it: "Austerity stinks. No one practices it anymore, least of all the nation's most hallowed financial institutions and corporations, least of all the average shareholder, least of all the Average American. . . .

"We now have the ironic situation of people buying stock in the most solid American firms in the fervent hope that someone will sap the firm's financial strength."

Even more ironic, perhaps, is that large institutions supplying funds to the buyout people are often pension funds. "Pension fund managers have become traders instead of investors," says John Young, president of Hewlett-Packard Co. Conceivably, pension fund money used in a takeover could contribute to the restructuring of the very company—and employees—that fund it.

The $2 billion down payment on the $20-plus billion buyout offer for RJR Nabisco will be provided by the retirement funds of, among others, Coca-Cola and Georgia Pacific (their *neighbors* in Atlanta!), and United Technologies.

ITT Chairman Rand Araskog, whose pension fund was involved in the RJR buyout, is now having strong reservations. He has called on the Securities and Exchange Commission and the Federal Trade Commission to examine the large mergers. "It's about time somebody said stop."

What happens up till then? One result of "restructuring America" is loss of jobs. Due directly to restructuring, more than a half million people were thrown out of work between 1984 and 1986 alone. Many of the casualties had spent 10, 20, or even 30 years with a company. Just five big leveraged buyouts done in the past three years—Borg-Warner, Allied Stores, Beatrice, Storer, and R.H. Macy—cost 114,000 people their employment.

As CBS's Andy Rooney put it, "these new takeover business leaders are going to eliminate unnecessary jobs and increase the profit. . . . It matters not to the businessmen that they often are firing loyal employees who made the business worth acquiring in the first place." (Macy's, incidentally, loaded with $5.3 billion in debt stemming mainly from its management-led leveraged buyout in 1986, recently reported a $19 million loss for its first quarter.)

Robert Greenleaf, a former management educator for AT&T, thinks employees should be the first constituency of concern to management. "When a business manager who is fully committed to this ethic is asked, 'What are you in business for,' the answer may be: 'I am in the business of growing people—people who are stronger, healthier, more autonomous, more self-reliant, more competent.'" Unfortunately, such lofty thoughts are not enjoying top-of-the-mind awareness among buyout firms—or, it seems, significant other sectors of American business today.

Also as a result of takeover pressure, says management expert Peter Drucker, corporate managements are being pushed into subordinating everything (even such long-range considerations as a company's market standing, its technology, indeed its basic wealth-producing capacity) to immediate earnings and next week's stock price. "This contributes to the . . . slighting of tomorrow in research, product development, and in quality and service—all to squeeze out a few more dollars in next quarter's bottom line."

The current wave of hostile takeovers and restructuring of hundreds of American corporations is a political struggle, not merely an economic phenomenon. At root, it's a fight over who is to own and control the American corporation: bona fide investors—including the American worker—or traders, greenmailers, and fast-buck artists. Obviously, financial acrobats are having their day, though high-wire acts never last forever. And their falls are generally calamitous.

Why fuss about takeovers and buyouts? After all, you can get as many people swearing by them as at them. First, because the American worker is deeply involved—his livelihood, his family, his peace of mind. And second because, as Drucker says, while there is a great deal of discussion about whether they are good or bad for the shareholders (generally good, short term), "there can be absolutely no doubt . . . that they are exceedingly bad for the economy. They force management into operating short term."

The threat of buyouts forces management into doing stupid things to keep from being raided—like spending its money on poor acquisitions, simply so that this money isn't on the company's books, waiting to be "absorbed" by a raider.

Worse still, says Drucker, is that after the successful takeover, the morale in a company is destroyed, often forever. The people who can leave do, and the others do the minimum. As he puts it: "what's the point in my trying to do a good job if the rug will be pulled out from under me tomorrow." Add to this, says Drucker, the fact that the raiders, in order to reimburse themselves, usually start out by selling off the company's most promising businesses. "Hence the impact of a takeover on morale is total catastrophe."

Harold Geneen agrees. "You can't fool people in companies," he told *Forbes*. "They know what you're like, and if you are the kind of person that would sell those people off because you could make $2 extra, they will know that about you and you will not be a good leader for the rest of the people."

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Geneen contends the argument that buyouts create greater management efficiency—due to the pressure on them to pay off the huge debt load—is specious. He says that while managements may be more effective in generating short-term cash flow, what's being overlooked is having organizations that have a long-term feeling and objectives. Kind of the difference between marriages made under the gun in Reno versus those in church.

"This is important," he says, "because you get something out of the employees that you're not going to get out of a leveraged buyout group. People can contribute a lot to business if they're so minded, or they can just go through the motions. . . . Morale is 80 percent of the competitive edge, and it's very hard to maintain this kind of morale if you've got a tremendous financial debt that's making you do things you wouldn't otherwise do."

How soon until normalcy returns? It may not happen for awhile. There is an unprecedented amount of leveraged money—some estimate $85 billion—available today, searching for targets of opportunity. As a result, virtually every company in America feels threatened.

On the other hand there seems to be a growing awareness that, with all this debt, the US may be mortgaging its future. Chairman Greenspan of the Federal Reserve Board has already asked the US Senate to consider changing the tax laws to discourage massive takeover borrowings.

And in recent testimony before the Senate Finance Committee, Treasury Secretary Brady had harsh criticism for the buyout craze, saying he has "a growing feeling that we are headed in the wrong direction when so much of our young talent and the nation's financial resources are aimed at financial engineering while the rest of the world is laying the foundations of the future."

Which perhaps explains the anxieties of the individual shareholders, who have fled the stock market in droves. They may be waiting for a signal that when they invest hard-earned savings, they're actually helping to build the country, rather than getting involved in a short-term crap shoot.

Thomas L. Mammoser is director of corporate communications at Walgreens.

POP CULTURE

Jeanne Berg

Detroit Shakedown

by Gary Vasilash

Stevie Wonder wants to become mayor of Detroit. He's had some trouble determining precisely when the election will be held, but no matter. He believes that he can be the mayor of Motown in the 90's. Now, this is no Sonny Bono and Palm Springs. Bono is decidedly a working-class stiff compared with the Retin A-swathed desert rats, and brings an air of reality to Southern California. Detroit, on the other hand, is an industrial city that's losing its industry, a place that is trying to figure out what it will become (the present mayor wanted to make it the Atlantic City of the Midwest). And yet Stevie, lack of experience notwithstanding (in interviews he notes that Ronald Reagan didn't have national experience either) wants to become the leader of Motown.

The real leader, of course, was Berry Gordy Jr., founder of Motown Records, who left town years ago, for LA, and has since sold the label to a conglomerate that's color-blind to every shade but green. All that remains of Motown in the recording sense is a museum on West Grand Boulevard in a neighborhood that once boasted chandelier-shimmering houses that have since become rundown funeral parlors.

As the city has gone, so have some of its citizens. Lester Bangs is one of the many casualties of Detroit's music scene. Bangs died in 1982, at age 34. The coroner indicated Darvon was a contributing factor. He might have added rock and roll—probably more that than the drug. Bangs, a writer, lived on rock. And in 1982, the pickings were pretty slim.

Bangs wasn't born in Detroit, nor did he die here. But he did work here during the early 70's, a pivotal time for both his development as a writer and for music journalism. Bangs plied his trade at *Creem* magazine during the same period as Dave Marsh, now editor of *Rock and Roll Confidential*. In those days *Creem* was a heavy-edged rock and roll magazine that was what rock is supposed to be: rebellious. And it made sense for such a magazine to exist in Detroit back then, for those were the nights (forget the days) when the MC5, Psychedelic Stooges, Bob Seger System, and the Amboy Dukes were ripping up the stages of venues that included the Grande Ballroom, the Birmingham Palladium, and the Eastown.

The MC5 were the original political revolutionaries of rock. Their "Kick Out the Jams," the unofficial anthem of the White Panther Party, opened with a 12-letter word that would permanently curl Tipper Gore's hair. The White Panther Party was led by John Sinclair, a big burly gent who still lives here, writing poetry. His White Panthers, unlike the Black, from whom the name was appropriated (private property is theft and all that), were given to playacting with weapons and smoking dope. There weren't any shootouts or explosions. But what they did was enough to raise the hackles of what they used to call "The Man." One result was that Sinclair was busted for possession of two joints and landed in a federal joint. This was such an issue that no less a deity than John Lennon came to Detroit and performed a song that he wrote especially for Sinclair. The city was hot.

So were the Stooges. They were fronted by Iggy Pop, who was then known as Iggy Stooge. The Stooges were the proto-punk band who had only a rudimentary—or bestial—understanding of how their instruments worked. Iggy pioneered in audience abuse; he was one of the first to start fighting with people in the crowd. Iggy, whose name more or less indicated his physique, normally got pummeled. Still, the anti-everything approach attracted imitators like the Sex

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Pistols, and Iggy's avant-garde weirdness still earns him entree to recording studios 20 years later.

Back in the 60's and early 70's Detroit also boasted the Amboy Dukes, whose "Journey to the Center of the Mind" taught many guitar players a thing or 20 about feedback. When the Dukes played they had the audience (figuratively) hanging from the rafters, while the lead guitar player, Ted Nugent, attired only in a loin cloth, was literally swinging above the stage. Nugent remains in the area, putting out albums of metal rock that don't have the lightweight aluminum textures of the current bands. His is more like the steel that's being rolled at the Ford Rouge Plant.

Another, more successful survivor is Bob Seger, a performer who could be given the Vegas "hardest-working-man-in-show-biz" moniker (I've seen him perform in shopping mall parking lots, local hockey rinks, and stadia). Seger was "just a regular guy," rebellious, proud, and libidinous long before Bruce Springsteen and John Cougar Mellencamp figured out that there's a whole population out there with those feelings.

Seger is probably best known nationally today for his contribution to the soundtrack of *Beverly Hills Cop II*, a film in which Eddie Murphy plays a disoriented Detroit cop in California. Of course, crime and Detroit seem to go together. Consider the career of Glenn Frey. When he was with the Eagles, he liked to forget his roots in suburban Detroit. But the band broke up and his career went nowhere until Glenn started crooning "You belong to the city" and appearing on *Miami Vice*—which is just a more scenic version of life in Detroit.

When the Rolling Stones called Detroit the best rock and roll town in the world, a comment captured live on the *Get Your Ya-Yas Out* album, the city responded with a knowing sneer. But that was then. And just as Detroit seemed to lose the edge in automotive technology, rock and roll went elsewhere. So in 1976 Lester Bangs went to New York. He free-lanced and became a regular contributor to the *Village Voice*.

In the undifferentiated incivility that is pop culture in New York, Bangs reached out to find the edges. This is one of the things that gives his writing a difference. Sometimes it's an irritating one, but his style can be as arresting as a scene out of Clive Barker's *Hellraiser*. The mere fact that Bangs wrote regularly, sometimes clearly, often coherently (although sometimes in an amphetamine babble), makes the work in *Psychotic Reaction and Carburetor Dung* (New York: Vintage Books; $9.95) worth a look. The book originally appeared in hardback, which makes about as much sense as a band recording only on digital audio tape. Bangs' is a pulp medium.

What that world is all about is captured cogently in a piece that Bangs wrote on the Clash for the *New Musical Express*, something of a British *Spin*, in 1977:

> The politics of rock 'n' roll . . . is that a whole lot of kids want to be fried out of their skins by the most scalding propulsion they can find, for a night they can pretend is the rest of their lives, and whether the next day they go back to work in the shops or boredom on the dole or American TV doldrums in Mom 'n' Daddy's living room nothing can cancel the reality of that night in the revivifying flames when for once if only then in your life you were blasted outside of yourself and the monotony which defines most life anywhere at any time, when you supped on lightning and nothing else in the realms of the living or dead mattered at all.

There is no use pretending that the 50's, into which rock and roll erupted, were anything but sterile, or that a shiftworker on the production line doesn't need to go crazy one night a week. But rock and roll as most of us experience it doesn't kill. Sometimes it just fades away, as it has done in Detroit, along with jobs and confidence in the future. When Bangs' one night becomes every night, as it did for him, the consequences can be DOA.

Gary Vasilash lives in Detroit.

LIBERAL ARTS

WHO ISN'T WHO

Not unlike other writers, I suppose, I began reading the *Columbia Literary History of the United States* (Emory Elliott, General Editor; New York: Columbia University Press; 1,263 pp., $60.00) with the index. It runs 50 full pages, double-columned, with roughly 50 items to a page, most of them proper names. Finding my own name spelled correctly—what a relief—I looked around for other contemporaries and noticed omissions that fell into several categories:

Poetry professors at Ivy League universities: Theodore Weiss, Edwin Honig, Daniel Hoffman, John Hollander, Michael Harper, Keith Waldrop, Daniel Halpern, Helen Vendler, Richard Eberhart, Robert Fitzgerald, Stanley Kunitz;

Sometime writer-editors of prominent literary reviews: John Leonard, George Core, Andrew Lytle, Frederick Morgan, Harvey Shapiro, Gordon Lish, William Phillips, Stephen Marcus, Robie Macauley, Robley Wilson, Robert Boyers, Herbert Liebowitz;

Highly visible litterateurs: Donald Hall, Andrei Codrescu, Howard Moss, Eric Bentley, Harry Levin, Louis D. Rubin, Howard Nemerov, James Atlas, George Steiner, Philip Lopate, Rosellen Brown, James Dickey, Frank Conroy, Wilfrid Sheed, Richard Gilman, George Plimpton, John Simon, Anthony Hecht, Geoffrey Wolff, Brad Leithauser, George Garrett, Thomas Merton, Dana Gioia, Anne Waldman, John Ciardi;

Younger pop novelists prematurely inducted into the putatively prestigious National Institute of Arts & Letters: Ann Tyler, Paul Theroux;

Avant-garde heavies (even though there is a full, if peculiar, chapter purportedly about "The Avant-Garde and Experimental Writing"): James Laughlin, Dick Higgins, Richard Foreman, Rosmarie Waldrop, Charles Amirkhanian, Norman Henry Pritchard II, Emmett Williams, and Pedro Pietri; who, since their kind has always been excluded from such histories, can now, so to speak, welcome the others to the club. Welcome.

—*Richard Kostelanetz*

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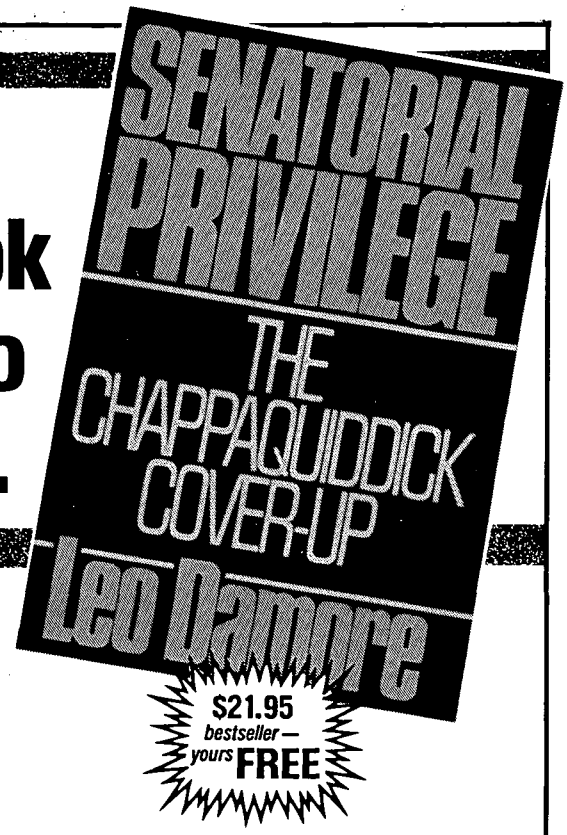
Despite a media brownout, this book fought its way onto the bestseller lists.



And when you read what it reveals about Teddy and Chappaquiddick, you'll see why.

Ray Kerrison explains it all in his *New York Post* column:

"The biggest surprise — and scandal — of the publishing season is the public's extraordinary demand for a book exposing Sen. Edward Kennedy's fatal escapade at Chappaquiddick, despite a review blackout by the nation's media giants.

This book is titled *Senatorial Privilege: The Chappaquiddick Cover-Up* (Regnery Gateway, $21.95). Written by Leo Damore, it made the *New York Times* non-fiction best-seller list yesterday for the eighth straight week.

Yet the . . . *Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, Boston Globe, Time* and *Newsweek* have all boycotted it.

The media blackout is all the more suspicious because Damore's account is a meticulous examination of what happened at the bridge and the aftermath. It was written with the cooperation of Joseph Gargan, a Kennedy cousin, who was involved in the nightmare. . . .

Damore's book leaves no doubt that: a) Kennedy left the party for a romantic interlude; b) he was drunk; c) he drove off the bridge at considerable speed; and d) his license had expired five months earlier.

It discloses how Ted Sorenson, President John F. Kennedy's speechwriter, drafted Sen. Kennedy's fictitious explanation of the tragedy for a national TV audience."

People Magazine shares the enthusiasm:

"An achievement of reportorial diligence, this book tells a story that the most imaginative crime novelist would have been hard put to invent. It is a tale of death, intrigue, obstruction of justice, corruption and politics. It is also one view of why Sen. Edward M. Kennedy was never indicted in connection with Mary Jo Kopechne's death . . . readers will find it hard to put down."

Adds the **Wall Street Journal**:

"Absorbing and definitive account . . . Damore . . . is a disciplined and relentless writer who makes his case more devastating because he never steps back and editorializes. Each falsehood, blunder and evasion is in tight focus. . ."

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